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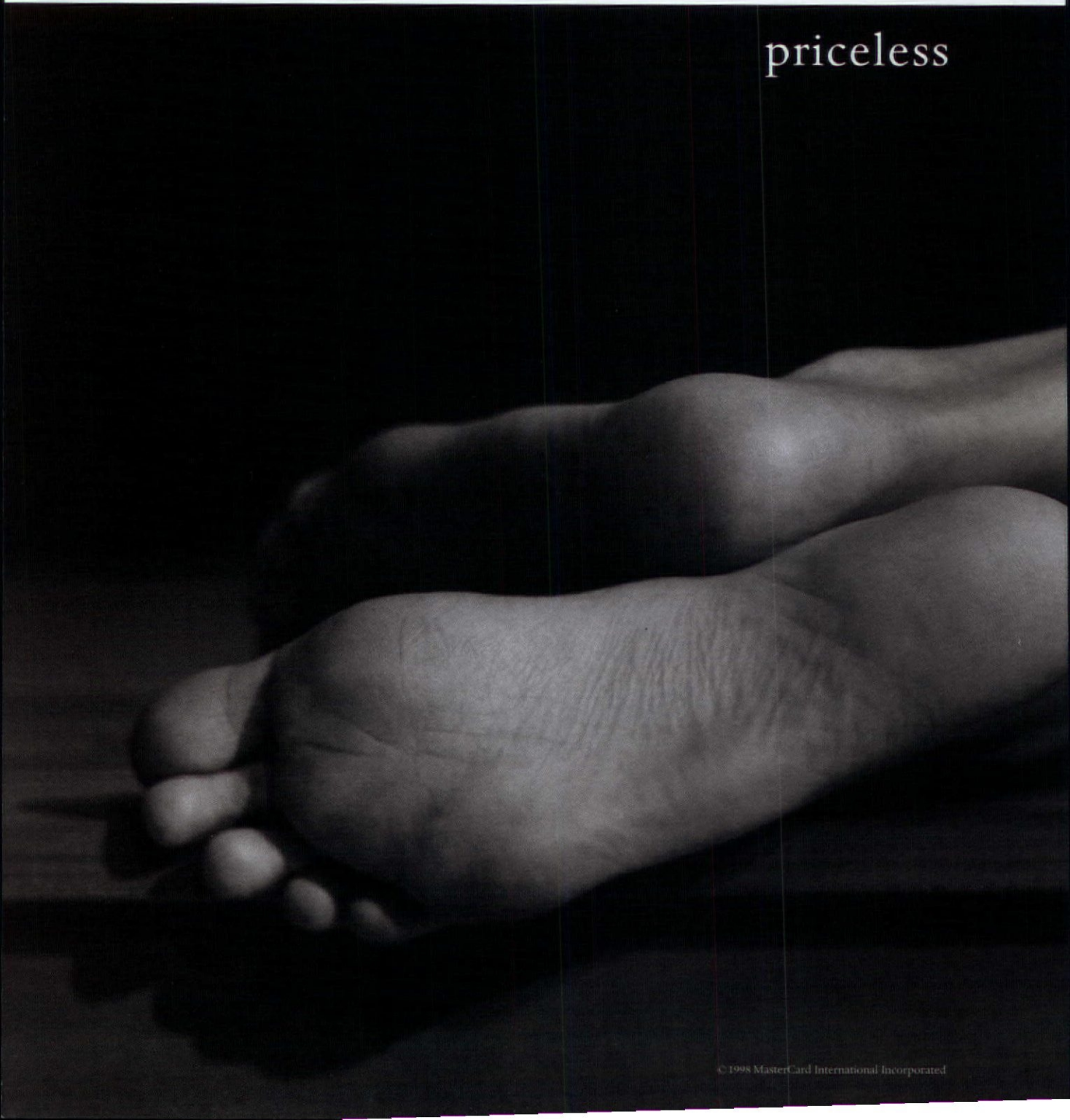
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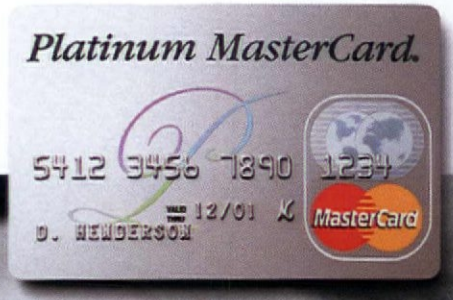
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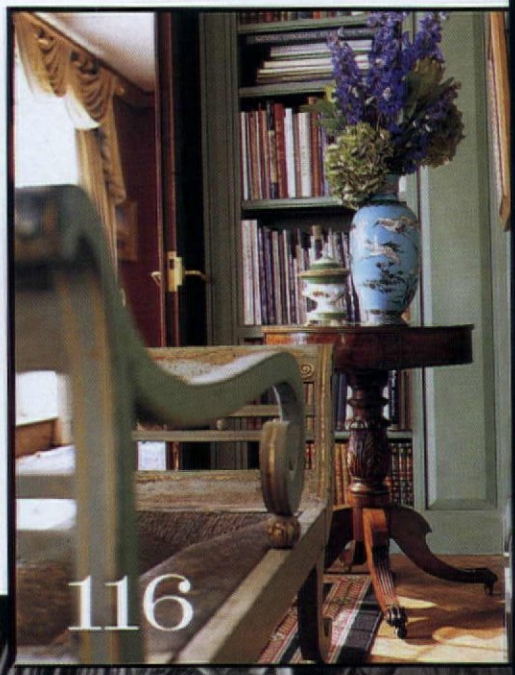
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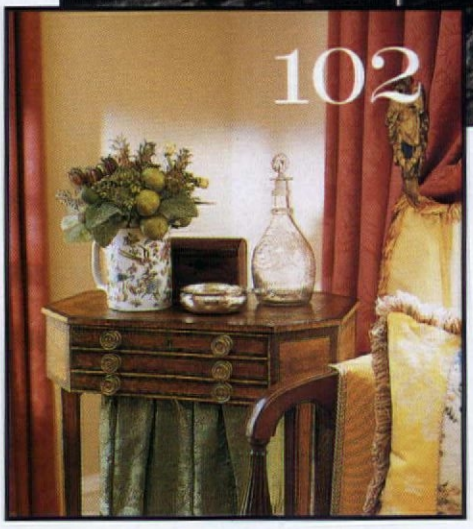
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garden

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ON THE COVER: "A PASSION FOR OUR PAST," PHOTOGRAPHED BY PIETER ESTERSOHN

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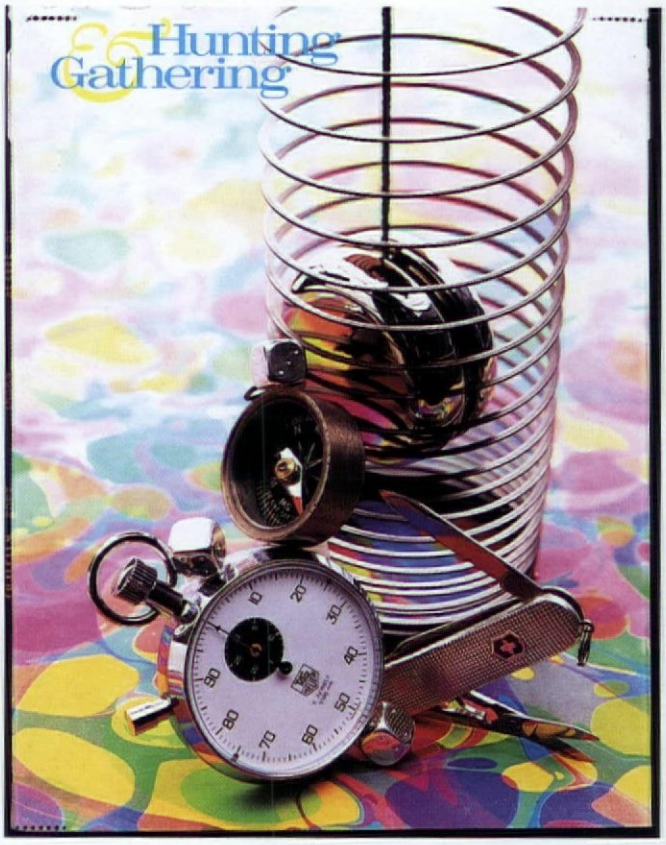

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Departments



Hotel Heaven 25

DESIGNS FOR LIVING Since architects and decorators are connoisseurs of style and comfort, we asked the experts to tell us which hotels are citadels of chic—and which ones are in desperate need of a makeover. **BY DAN SHAW**



Play Time 51

LET THE FUN BEGIN There are only winners when the games are played with luxurious grown-up versions of childhood favorites—a nickel yo-yo, sterling silver dice, a shiny, sleek Slinky. Remember to play fair.

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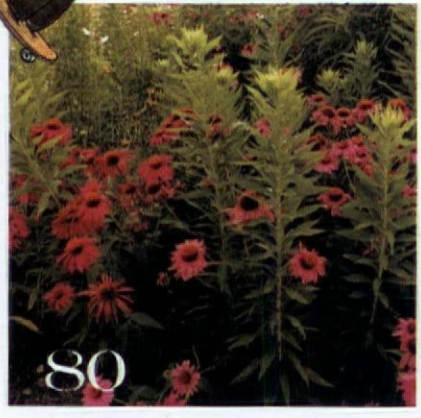
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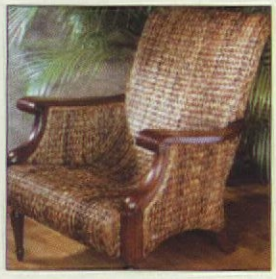
the more civilized we become.



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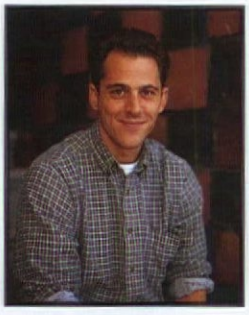


^ DAN SHAW

"Traveling well is the best revenge," says "Domestic Bliss" editor Dan Shaw. This month he polls designers, asking which hotels meet their exacting standards and which need a makeover. "Hotel design is a hot topic right now," he says. "Many design professionals get inspiration for residential projects when they're on the road. And they're the quintessential critics. They won't settle for banal beds or baths."

v EVAN SKLAR

In "The Garden of Rocky Delights," page 128, the photographer, who studied at Yale, captures the eccentric pleasures of actor Tim Curry's Los Angeles garden. "It's a wonderfully quirky garden, mixing British sensibilities with L.A. style," he says. Sklar's photographs appear in *The Campagna Table: Country Style Italian Cooking* (William Morrow).



v TIM APPELO

Long a master of the inspired rather than insipid magazine feature on popular culture, Appelo awards actor Tim Curry's garden star quality ("The Garden of Rocky Delights," page 128). Appelo lives mostly indoors in Seattle, where he's a senior editor for best-sellers at Amazon.com.



^ DEBORAH NEEDLEMAN

In "Rich Simplicity," page 154, the editor at large visits with floral designer Antony Todd, whose style and personality completely charmed her. "He inspires you to think carefully about your surroundings," she explains. "He focuses on all the details. And he makes sure the people around him are happy." Her daughter, Lily, also enjoyed the shoot. "It was the first day she didn't cry once."—SABINE ROTHMAN



DAVID YURMAN



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sweet dreams

PILLOW TALK

THE LAST TIME I tore out pages from an interiors magazine and put them under my pillow was after reading *House & Garden*'s May 1984 issue. The genius of Jayne Wrightsman's drawing room in her Palm Beach home and the amazing textile arranged by Vincent Fourcade have never been matched in any foreign or domestic publication . . . until *House & Garden*'s September issue. Nineteen pages of Howard Slatkin's genius ["The Alchemist at Home"] have joined the 15-year-old article of timeless beauty under my pillow. Thank you!

CAROL GRESKO
Ephraim, WI

LET IT POUR

"PAST PERFECT" AND "UNCORKED" are my favorite parts of *House & Garden*. I particularly enjoyed Jay McInerney's article on St.-Estèphe bordeaux ["Breakout Bordeaux," July]. At a house sale recently, I found a bottle of Château Calon-Ségur Premier Cru St.-Estèphe Médoc—1952! Dare I drink it?

ANNE SIEBENHOVEN
New York, NY



ST.-ESTÈPHE The wine in question

Jay McInerney responds:
Old wine is always something of an enigma, but '52 was a decent and well-structured year in Bordeaux, and Calon-Ségur is notoriously long-lived. There's no reason not to pop the cork and try it. You may be in for a pleasant surprise. Santé!



TOUJOURS PARIS A shopping delight for design enthusiasts

C'EST LA VIE

I HAVE BEEN a great admirer of your magazine for many years. I especially adored the October Paris issue: lots of friends were named and apartments shown. But how disappointed I was to see your shopping guide and pullout map ["Shopping Paris!"]. "Our" street, rue de l'Université, with 25 antiques dealers, was completely forgotten! [Still] I will go on loving your magazine.

AKKO VAN ACKER
Paris, France

MUST READ

EVERY ISSUE I find Dominique Browning's page a must-read, but she wrote so exquisitely in the September issue that it almost brought tears to my eyes. What a talent: she really connects with the reader!

ETHELANNE DEMBOW
Paradise Valley, AZ

THANKS FOR the wonderful new *House & Garden*. It's great! And one of your best to date.

MICHAEL S. OVITZ
Beverly Hills, CA

CONGRATULATIONS on the September "Luxury" issue. It is grand and provocative—as it should be with such a title! Continue to work your magic!

TOPHER DELANEY
Landscape architect
San Francisco, CA

PAPER CHASE

I FOUND YOUR September "Luxury" issue beautiful and fascinating. However, there is apparently confusion concerning the wallpaper in Howard Slatkin's gallery ["The Alchemist at Home"]. The wallpaper is not by Zuber. The hand-blocked French paper dates from the early nineteenth century and was produced by an unidentified studio. My familiarity with this paper is firsthand: Howard consulted the Metropolitan Museum of Art requesting a recommendation for a firm capable of restoring and adding to a fine antique paper, and the Metropolitan recommended our studio. Gracie restored this paper, provided research relative to the balance of the missing design, and hand-painted and antiqued new designs to match the original. I hope that this clarifies some of the confusion.

BRIAN GRACIE
President, Gracie
New York, NY

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letting go

As the century draws to a close (drums roll), I find myself fervently cleaning closets (violins tremble). I'm preoccupied—and have been for months—with figuring out what I want to take with me into the next years of my life, and what I want to let go of. I'm not alone in these thoughts. Time, with its demarcation of hours and years and centuries, may be an arbitrary invention, yet that seems to have done little to diminish the large spiritual impact that the turn of the century seems to be having on us, judging by every kind of buzz and sermon going on these days. I realize I don't entirely have control over deciding what goes and what stays, having recently said a final good-bye to a cherished mother-in-law and a beloved aunt. And as I prepare the garden for winter, I know it will begin its own journey into the year 2000, and some of it will pull through and some won't. Thankfully though, when stymied by the inexplicable, we can always turn to the world of things to make us feel as if we have some hope of making sense of our destinies.

Back to those closets and attics and basements and boxes and trunks and drawers and shelves full of things that accumulate in our rooms. Some of my things seem no longer to want to belong to me, so I've started giving them away. The pillows that would look beautiful on N.'s bed, the rug that really wants to be in J.'s house, the dishes that ought to grace B.'s table—off they go. May they give my friends the same delight they once gave me. Then there are the things too heavy to carry, too full of memory: love lost in the warp and weft of that Navajo blanket, tears traced into that set of CDs played obsessively into too many nights. Be gone.

There seems to be some primitive instinct among us to load up the raft and tie down the household to get ready to pole across the river. So, what is it we want to carry with us? It's interesting to think back over the past few months and ask yourself what rooms in your house you've really used, where you've been doing your living, and what that tells you about what you need now. One friend of mine, who lives an impossibly busy life, found herself—for the first time—on her city terrace night after night this fall, simply winding down in the moonlight. She never thought of herself as capable of relaxation, and her garden taught her that she was. The garden stays.

Same goes for things: what are you drawn to, what are you buying, and what does that tell you? I find myself stocking up on books and music and wine—no mystery there—and buying photographs that, surprisingly (compared with what I used to buy), are images from the natural world. Pictures of water, and trees, and flowers, and animals. Perhaps I'm shoring up against a growing anxiety that if we aren't more careful, we're going to lose our home of homes. I'm drawn as well to pictures of ancient monuments—the Egyptian pyramids, the medieval city of Matera in Italy, the icebergs of the polar cap—as if to reassure myself that things are able to survive (in spite of us) a long, long time. In London recently I stopped at a wonderful institution of a shop, James Smith & Sons, and bought two magnificent umbrellas, sturdy and simple, the kind you can lean on and lean under. Umbrellas to make any front hall proud, umbrellas for decades' worth of afternoon walks in the drizzly dazzle of the garden.

It is, of course, much harder to let go of big things than it is to wish for the new things that will bring happiness. Perhaps it should go without saying: Let go of the people who cause constant pain; let go of the negativity that colors a room more darkly than any coat of paint. Keep close the people you love, the ones who stay engaged and open to life, who bring joy and peace to house and garden. Take with you everything you've learned—and remain humble enough to learn more. I feel a deep need to simplify my household, but far be it from me to suggest that to do so means simply to get rid of things. Would that anything were so easy. Perhaps the new simplicity—a simplicity for the next century—will lie in some clarity about what it is we want, and what we need, from the rooms of our lives.



Dominique Browning, EDITOR

[WINDOWS]

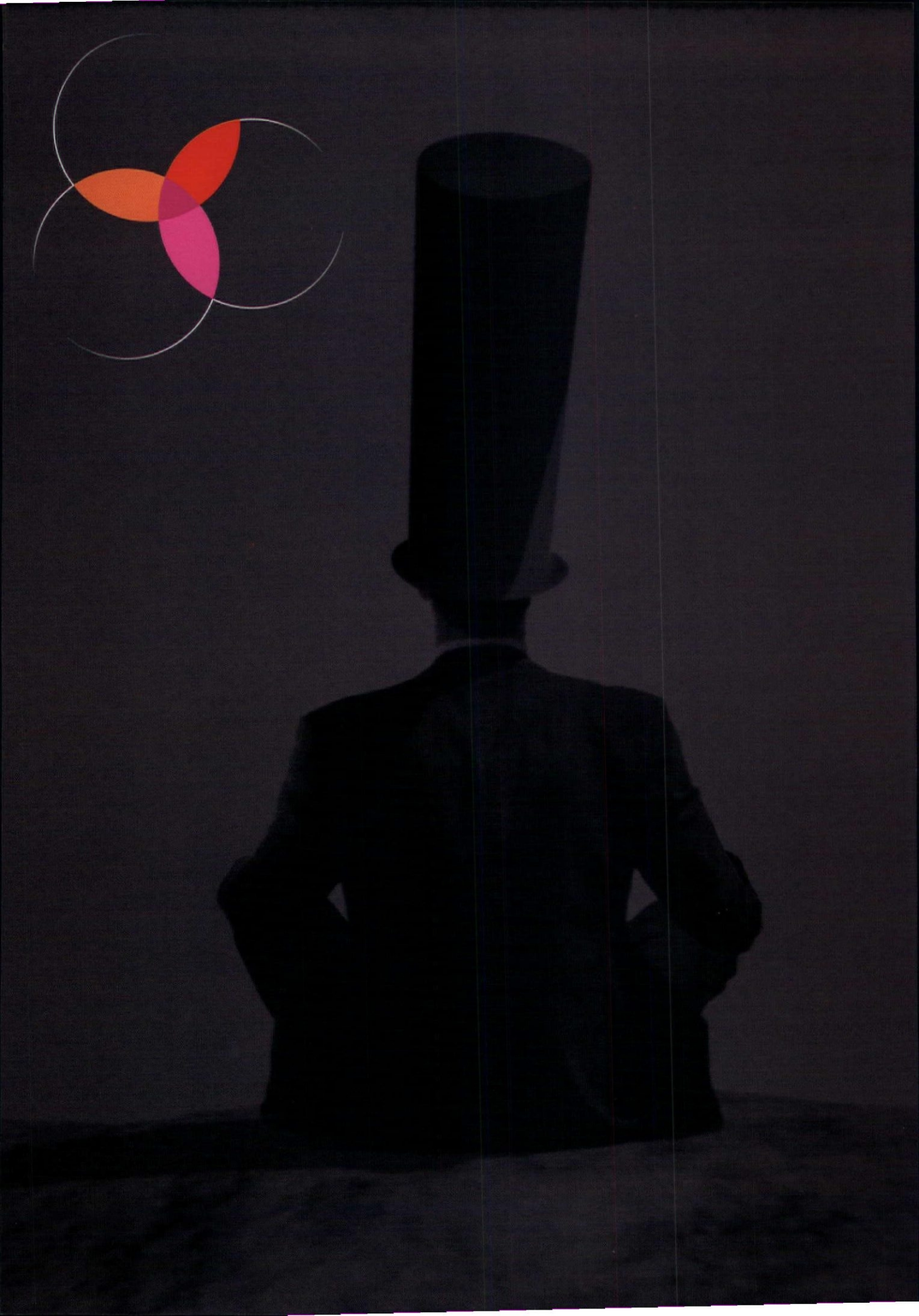
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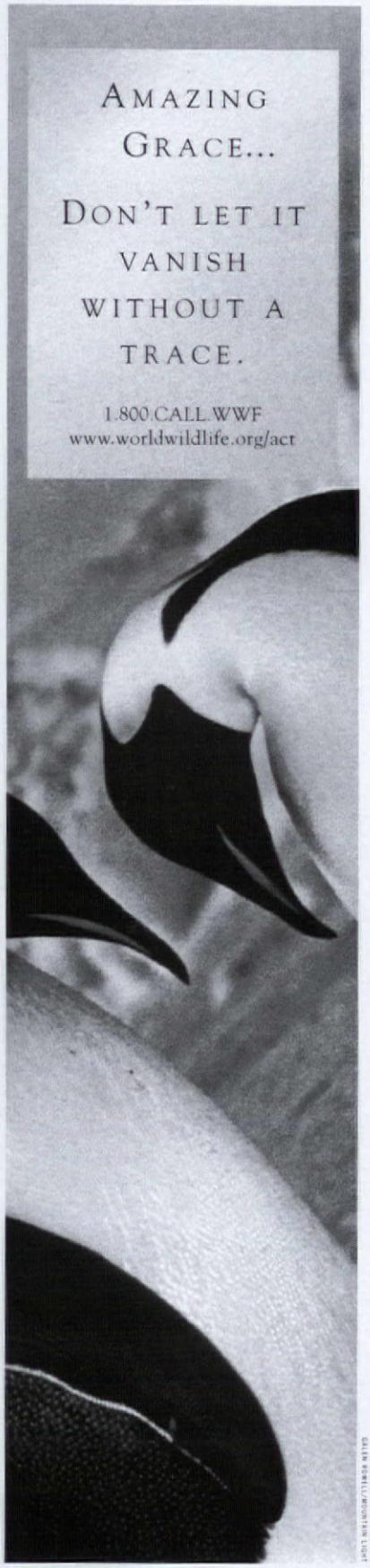
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The Mingus Pitcher designed by Vicke Lindstrand, handcrafted at the Orrefors Glassworks in Sweden.

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domestic bliss



JENNIFER POST, a New York interior designer, in the penthouse of her favorite American hotel, the Four Seasons in Manhattan.

hotel heaven

INTERIOR DESIGNERS ARE especially fussy about where they stay. They don't settle for anything less than sumptuous beds, luxurious bathrooms, and first-class service—and in a perfect world, neither would you. We polled 14 design pros about their favorite destinations, and they cited great rooms from Bangkok to Bel-Air. For them, staying at a hotel is a busman's holiday: they often get decorating ideas when they're on the road, which is just as it should be. After all, the best hotels *are* homes away from home.

hot goods
page 37

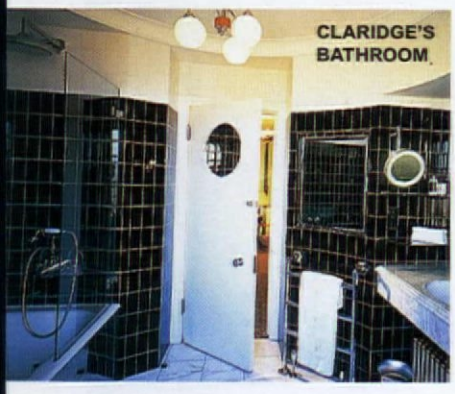


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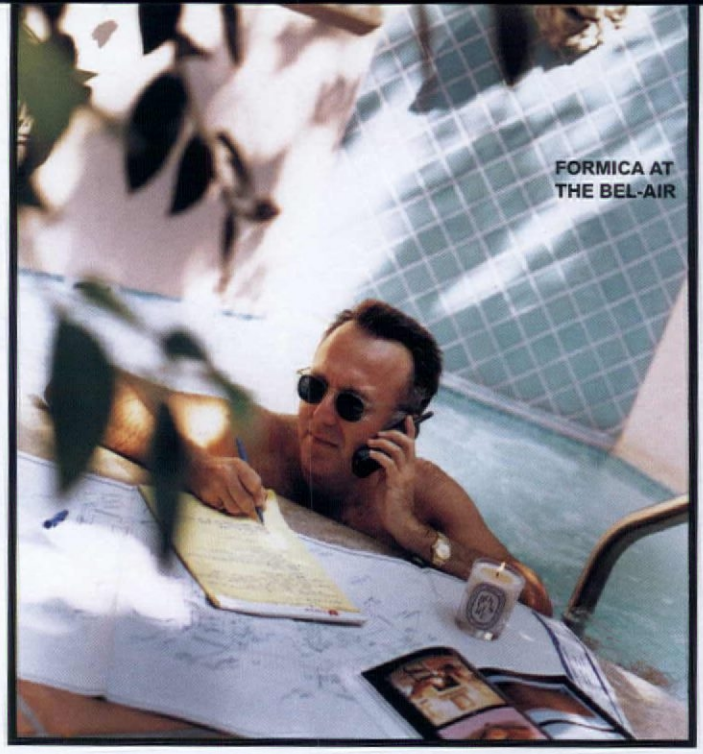
bliss hotel heaven

stephen miller and nanette brown *Architects*

OUR FAVORITE HOTEL IN THE WORLD IS Hotel Villa San Michele in Fiesole, overlooking Florence. Its facade was designed by Michelangelo, and it has the most divine chef. It's the very best of past and present **OUR FAVORITE AMERICAN HOTEL IS** The Four Seasons in New York. It is like a jewel box floating above the clouds, with spectacular views **THE BEST BED IS AT** The Ritz in Madrid, because of its wonderfully fabulous old linen bedding **THE BEST BATHROOM IS AT** Claridge's in London. It's large enough for a dinner party **THE BEST-DECORATED ROOM IS AT** Due Torri Hotel in Verona, because the rooms have period antiques that are to die for **THE BEST IDEA WE'VE GOTTEN** Bedside tables with built-in controls for everything (lighting, TV, stereo). You never have to leave your bed **TO PERSONALIZE OUR ROOMS** We order fresh flowers (if they are not already there) and unpack, and Stephen puts out photos of his two dogs **THE HOTEL WE WOULD MOST LIKE TO REDECORATE IS** L'Hotel in Paris. It has the most amazing cylindrical court, with a dome that reaches the sky. But the hotel is in desperate need of a face-lift and a fresh, smiling staff **WE COULD LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER AT** The Four Seasons, because it is so close to our office we could order room service



CLARIDGE'S BATHROOM



FORMICA AT THE BEL-AIR

michael formica *Interior designer*

MY FAVORITE HOTEL IN THE WORLD IS Hotel Costes in Paris. It is one of the very few hotels that truly feel like a home away from home; besides which, they make me feel like God! **MY FAVORITE AMERICAN HOTEL IS** The Bel-Air. It's sexy, discreet, and so private—not that I do anything that requires such discretion and privacy **THE BEST BED IS AT** The Grand Hotel Timeo in Taormina, Sicily, because of the view of smoldering Mount Etna from the bed **THE BEST BATHROOM IS AT** Cap Juluca in Anguilla—the size of a New York studio apartment, marble everywhere, with private garden, but almost Zen-like in its understatement **THE HOTEL THAT MOST INSPIRES ME AS A DESIGNER IS** The Tawaraya Ryokan in Kyoto, a 17th-century Japanese inn that is absolutely genuine and appropriate to its surroundings **TO PERSONALIZE MY ROOM** I always bring my owns CDs, soap, shampoo, Diptyque candles, vodka, and diet Coke—no mini bars for me! **I WOULD MOST LIKE TO REDECORATE** The Ritz in Paris, because, like Mount Everest, it's there—and so, so, so tacky



FORMICA'S TRAVELING COMPANIONS

jennifer post *Interior designer*

MY FAVORITE HOTEL IN THE WORLD IS Cove Castles Villa Resort, Anguilla. It's an architectural wonder on the sea **MY FAVORITE AMERICAN HOTEL IS** The Four Seasons in New York—understated class. You either belong or you don't! **THE BEST BED IS AT** The Ciragen Palace in Istanbul—linens, linens, and more fine linens! **THE BEST BATHROOM IS AT** The Bristol in Paris—amenities, amenities, and more amenities! **THE BEST-DECORATED ROOM IS AT** Cipriani in Venice. The suite had space, color, light, antiques, and, of course, the sound of the gondolas **THE HOTEL THAT MOST INSPIRES ME AS A DESIGNER IS** The Peninsula Hong Kong, because everywhere one looks there is something to be appreciated **TO PERSONALIZE MY ROOM** I remove everything that is loose on tables or walls and put out my own belongings **I WOULD MOST LIKE TO REDECORATE** The Plaza Athenée in Paris. It would be such a challenge to combine classic and contemporary furnishings in a first-class 20th-century hotel. It needs a sophisticated and sensual image **I COULD LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER AT** Cove Castles—freedom of thought and unlimited potential for construction and design projects



VENICE'S CIPRIANI



15,000,000 BC
Time begins

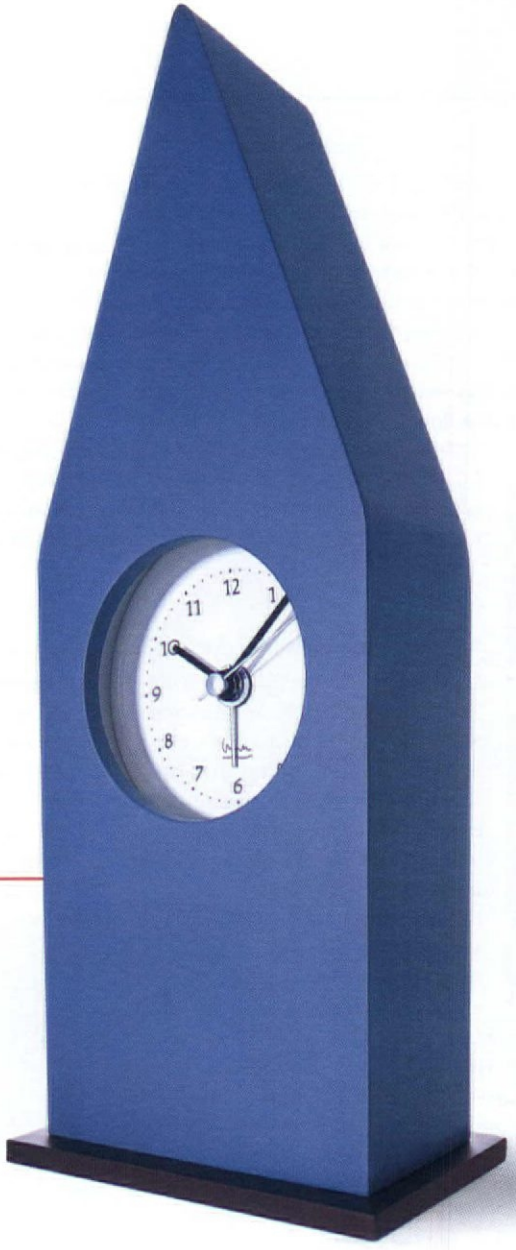


1856
ig Ben is unveiled



1953
Gnomes make move to suburbs

1999
Michael Graves™ mantle clock, $19.99 at Target®



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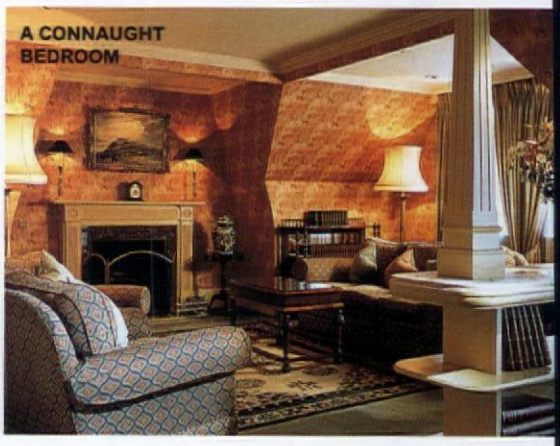
CARLY AND JUDY KING AT THE CARLYLE

judy king *Interior designer*

MY FAVORITE HOTEL IN THE WORLD IS La Mamounia in Marrakech, Morocco MY FAVORITE AMERICAN HOTEL IS The Carlyle in New York. I've had the pleasure of redesigning a private residence there, and I could absolutely live at the Carlyle full time. I conceived my third child in room 405; her name is Carly, short for Carlyle THE BEST-DECORATED ROOM IS AT The round house at Skibo Castle in Dornoch, Scotland. The room is enclosed in brick, with wonderful period tapestries hanging off heavy, forged-iron rods banking the leaded windows, with exterior window boxes overflowing with Scottish wildflowers HOTELS HAVE INSPIRED ME TO PURCHASE George Smith furniture and fabrics from Nina Campbell and Designers Guild TO PERSONALIZE MY ROOM I bring my own down pillow wherever I go, light a Rigaud candle (gardenia), and always have a silver-framed picture of my three children I WOULD MOST LIKE TO REDECORATE The Mohonk Mountain House in upstate New York. As grand and wonderful as the hotel is, it is too dark and drab. A total overhaul is due!

mario buatta *Interior designer*

MY FAVORITE HOTEL IN THE WORLD IS The Connaught in London. It's got old-world charm, it's quiet, and it has great food MY FAVORITE AMERICAN HOTEL IS The Ritz-Carlton in Boston THE BEST BED IS AT The Huntington Hotel in San Francisco—large, firm, and fresh THE BEST BATHROOM IS AT Claridge's in London. Deco mirrors! THE BEST-DECORATED ROOMS ARE AT Claridge's; they're wonderful 1930s Art Deco THE HOTEL THAT MOST INSPIRES ME AS A DESIGNER IS Claridge's TO PERSONALIZE MY ROOM I remove the ashtrays, bring my own pillow, and buy fresh flowers or a flowering plant THE HOTEL I WOULD MOST LIKE TO REDECORATE IS The Plaza in New York. It needs it very badly! I COULD LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER AT The Connaught. It has the most convenient location, and I love the Grill Room for traditional English food



A CONNAUGHT BEDROOM



FOUR SEASONS, MILAN

sally sirkin lewis *Owner, J. Robert Scott*

MY FAVORITE HOTELS IN THE WORLD ARE The Four Seasons in Milan, for the beauty of the old and new worlds, combined with the exquisite service, the people, and because it is Italy! The Sukhothai in Bangkok, for the sheer elegance from every vista, the impeccable Thai service, the quality throughout, the extreme serenity—it's an oasis amid the tumult of Bangkok MY FAVORITE AMERICAN HOTEL IS The Regency in New York, because I have been going there for 25 years. The staff know me, and I feel comfortable at all times THE BEST BED IS AT All of the above, most particularly the Four Seasons, because of the exquisite Italian linens TO PERSONALIZE MY ROOM I take out photos of my children and my dogs, and my personal travel alarm clock

susan orsini *Interior designer*

MY FAVORITE HOTEL IN THE WORLD IS Villa San Michele, Fiesole. It is so much of another time. You are transported to the past MY FAVORITE AMERICAN HOTEL IS The Bel-Air—it's romantic THE BEST BATHROOM IS AT The Regent Beverly Wilshire in Beverly Hills. It's large, and attention has been paid to every detail THE BEST-DECORATED ROOM IS AT The Gritti Palace in Venice. It feels like a room in a home, not a hotel THE HOTEL THAT MOST INSPIRES ME AS A DESIGNER IS San Domenico Palace Hotel is Taormina, Sicily, because of the way contemporary architectural details have been married to a 15th-century monastery TO PERSONALIZE MY ROOM I unpack and organize the minute I arrive I WOULD MOST LIKE TO REDECORATE The St. Regis in New York. It is one of my favorites, but it could be so much better I COULD LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER AT The Carlyle in New York, because of the neighborhood and the room service!



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LA MAMOUNIA IN MARRAKECH


COHLER AT LA MAMOUNIA

eric cohler *Architectural designer*

MY FAVORITE HOTEL IN THE WORLD IS The Mount Nelson in Cape Town. The service, high tea, jasmine-scented gardens, and rooms are pure British Colonial hospitality **THE BEST BED IS AT** The slightly down-at-the-heels Grand Hotel Bohemia in Prague. There was a true eiderdown featherbed—I literally floated to sleep **THE BEST BATHROOM IS AT** The Ritz in Paris. It is a gargantuan affair, with a tub one can completely submerge in and a corner fireplace **I'VE PURCHASED** Silver and glass tumblers after seeing them at the Four Seasons in Milan **TO PERSONALIZE MY ROOM** I bring my grandfather's traveling alarm clock **THE HOTEL THAT MOST INSPIRES ME IS** The Mala Mala Game Reserve in South Africa. The setting is so breathtakingly beautiful, and animal life so threatening, that you realize how inconsequential we are in the scheme of things **I COULD LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER AT** La Mamounia in Marrakech


COHLER'S CLOCK

mariette himes gomez *Interior designer*



PENINSULA PILLOW

MY FAVORITE HOTEL IN THE WORLD IS The Peninsula Beverly Hills. It's the perfect size. It always feels like home **THE BEST BED IS AT** The Peninsula, because of the quality and crispness of all the linens. You can even have your own monogrammed pillow cases **THE BEST BATHROOM IS AT** The Peninsula. The lighting is divine **THE BEST-DECORATED ROOM IS AT** The Mayflower Inn in Washington, CT **THE BEST DECORATING IDEAS I'VE GOTTEN ARE FROM** The Homestead Inn in Greenwich, CT—lots of bright, sophisticated fabrics **THE HOTEL THAT MOST INSPIRES ME AS A DESIGNER IS** The Four Seasons in New York—just the actual scale of the first floor **TO PERSONALIZE MY ROOM** I add flowers, my own robe, and a mystery book **I WOULD MOST LIKE TO REDECORATE** Any Holiday Inn

celeste cooper *Interior designer*

MY FAVORITE HOTEL IN THE WORLD IS The Montalembert in Paris, because it's in Paris and because it shares my modernist aesthetic **MY FAVORITE AMERICAN HOTEL IS** The Bel-Air, because of its sense of sanctuary—and great service **THE BEST BATHROOMS ARE AT** The Hempel in London, and the Regent Beverly Wilshire in Los Angeles—practically a spa in your room **THE BEST-DECORATED ROOM IS AT** The Hempel in London—clean, simple, spare, dramatic **THE BEST DECORATING IDEA I'VE GOTTEN FROM HOTELS IS** What not to do—most of them look like glorified motels **TO PERSONALIZE MY ROOM** I go to Christian Tortu when I'm in Paris and buy exquisite flowers **I WOULD MOST LIKE TO REDECORATE** Any of the average five-star hotels; they're so full of received wisdom **I COULD LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER AT** I wasn't born to be Eloise (although I would consider pouring a pitcher of water down the mail chute). I like my own space too much to live in a hotel


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THE W'S AMENITIES

sheila bridges

Interior designer

MY FAVORITE HOTELS IN THE WORLD ARE Grand-Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat, France; Hôtel San Pietro in Positano, Italy; and the Metropolitan, London **MY FAVORITE AMERICAN HOTELS ARE** Shutters on the Beach in Santa Monica—great views of the ocean, great decor, fireplaces in some of the rooms; the W San Francisco—it has Aveda products in the bathroom, and you can surf the Web on the TV; the Delano in Miami in February, when I'm totally and completely burnt from work and need a stark (literally) white room to regroup and put it all back in perspective **THE BEST BATHROOM IS AT** Shutters—perfect proportions **TO PERSONALIZE MY ROOM** I unpack and rearrange the toiletries immediately upon arrival. I bring my own alarm clock, too, and sometimes sachets for the drawers **THE BEST IDEA I'VE GOTTEN** Long, flowing, billowy draperies from the Delano's lobby **I COULD LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER AT** One Aldwych in London, which is completely luxurious without being pretentious: luxe without fuss

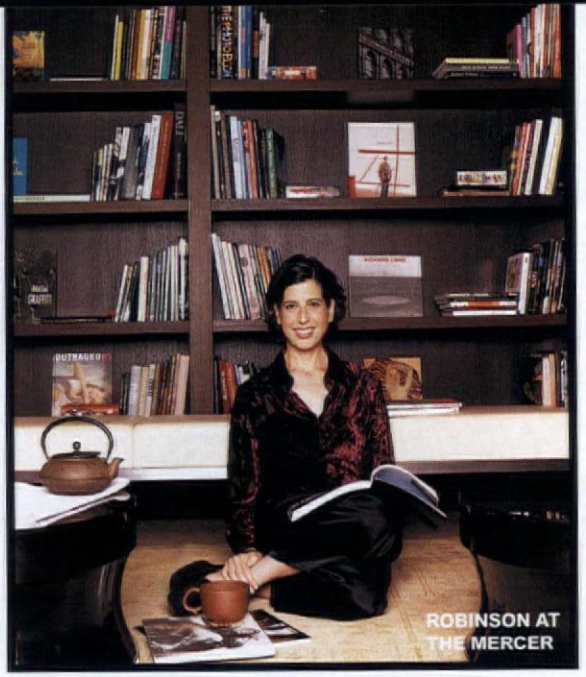
orlando diaz-azcuy

Interior designer

MY FAVORITE HOTELS IN THE WORLD ARE Villa D'Este in Como, Italy, and Hotel Château 'Esclimont, a former grand home outside of Paris **MY FAVORITE AMERICAN HOTEL IS** The Pierre in New York—service, elegance, good rooms **THE BEST HOTEL BED IS** Nowhere! I like soft beds, but the theory goes, "The harder the bed, the better for your posture." Baloney! **THE BEST BATHROOM IS AT** The Ritz in Paris, because of the size and the natural light from the windows overlooking the Place Vendôme. It's appointed in a traditional fashion that is complementary to the age of the hotel, but with all the amenities of today **TO PERSONALIZE MY ROOM** I buy flowers, if I stay a week or so; otherwise, I let the culture of the hotel feed me. I travel to have new experiences **I WOULD MOST LIKE TO REDECORATE** The Century Plaza Hotel in L.A., because it is a modern structure and has never looked like anything; the Biltmore in L.A.; the Plaza in New York, to prove that you don't need that much gold leaf to make it elegant **I COULD LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER AT** The Pierre



A PIERRE SUITE


ROBINSON AT THE MERCER

eve robinson

Interior designer

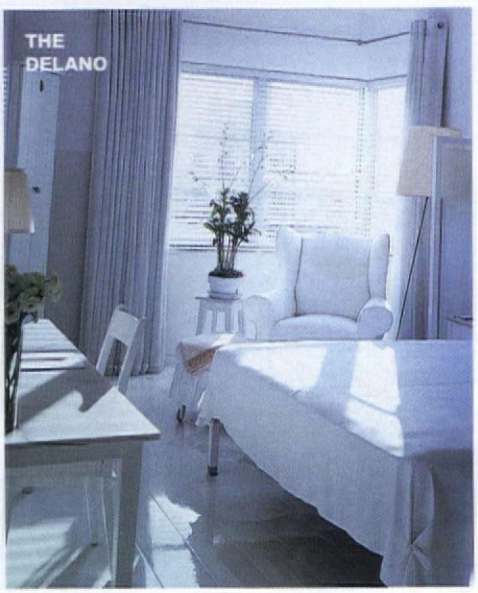
MY FAVORITE HOTEL IN THE WORLD IS The Montalembert in Paris. Its simplicity and sophistication provide a serene and relaxing haven **THE BEST BATHROOM IS AT** The Dorchester in London. It is large and luxurious, and the materials used are exquisite **THE BEST-DECORATED ROOMS ARE AT** The Regent in Bangkok **WHAT I'VE PURCHASED FROM A HOTEL** The Thai silk pillow covers at the Regent in Bangkok **THE HOTEL THAT MOST INSPIRES ME AS A DESIGNER IS** The Mercer in SoHo, NYC, especially the bookcase in the lobby. I love the clean lines and use of materials **TO PERSONALIZE MY ROOM** I lay out my books and magazines. I unpack everything and put my pajamas under the pillow **I WOULD MOST LIKE TO REDECORATE** The Manoir d'Hautegente, an 18th-century manor house in the Dordogne region of France, which is set in a park where the owners raise geese. A renovation would make an agreeable hotel into a splendid one


THAI PILLOWS

alex jordan & dan smieszny

Interior designer and architect

OUR FAVORITE HOTELS IN THE WORLD ARE The Halkin in London—small lobby and great baths; the Montalembert in Paris—great style, wonderful lobby **OUR FAVORITE AMERICAN HOTEL IS** The Four Seasons in New York City—dramatic architecture and fabulous location **THE BEST BEDS ARE AT** The Four Seasons and the L'Ermitage Beverly Hills **THE BEST BATHROOMS ARE AT** The L'Ermitage Beverly Hills—clad in cream marble and sycamore, with nickel fittings and beautiful lighting **THE BEST-DECORATED ROOMS ARE AT** The Bel-Air—every suite is different and has a residential quality **THE BEST DECORATING IDEA WE'VE GOTTEN** How to light a bath with hidden sources **THE HOTEL THAT MOST INSPIRES US AS DESIGNERS IS** The Delano in Miami Beach—just for its sheer creativity and decadence **TO PERSONALIZE OUR ROOMS** We don't do much—we prefer to travel very light **WE WOULD MOST LIKE TO REDECORATE** The Bristol in Paris, because you'd start with such beautiful architecture **WE COULD LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER AT** We wouldn't want to live in a hotel permanently


THE DELANO



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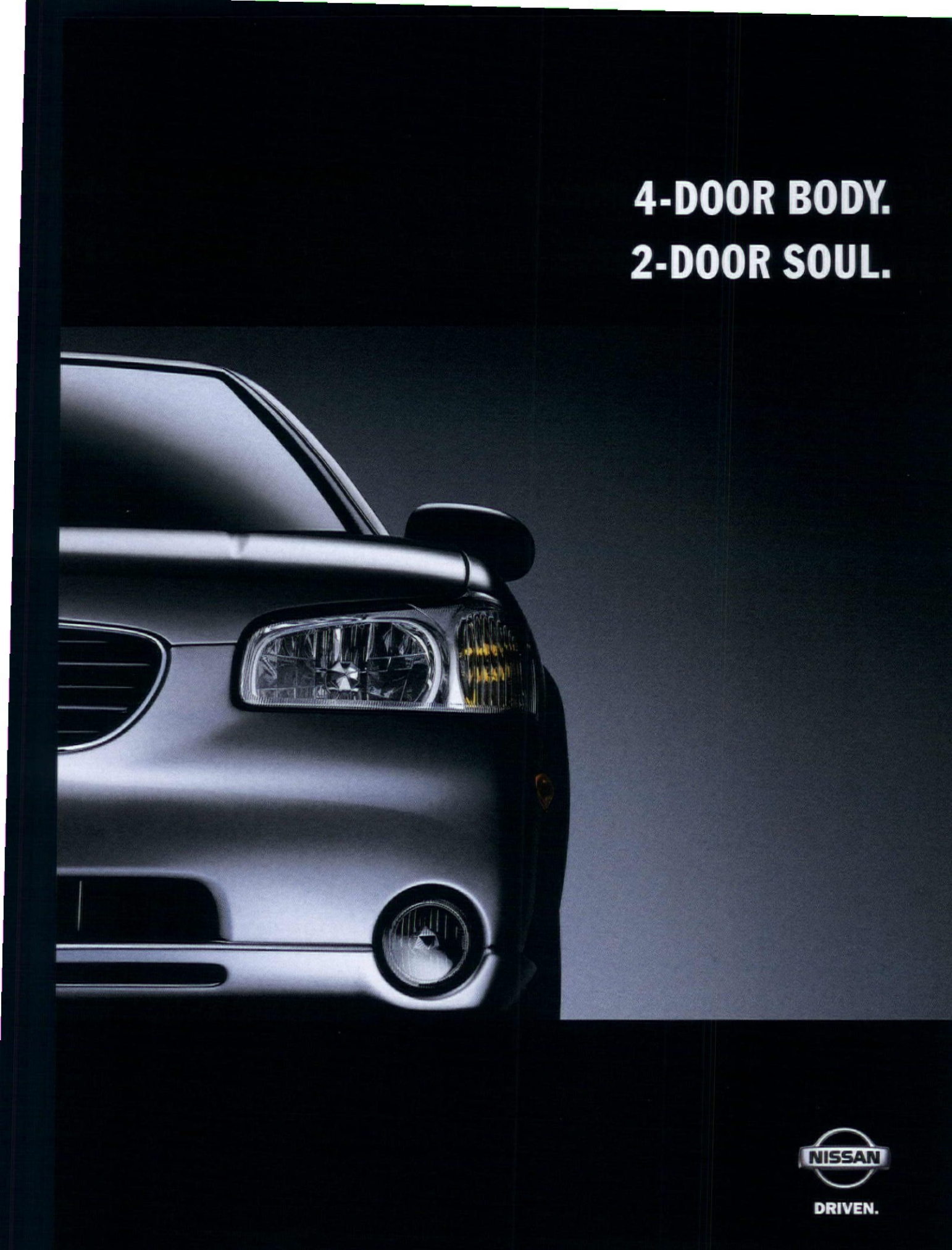
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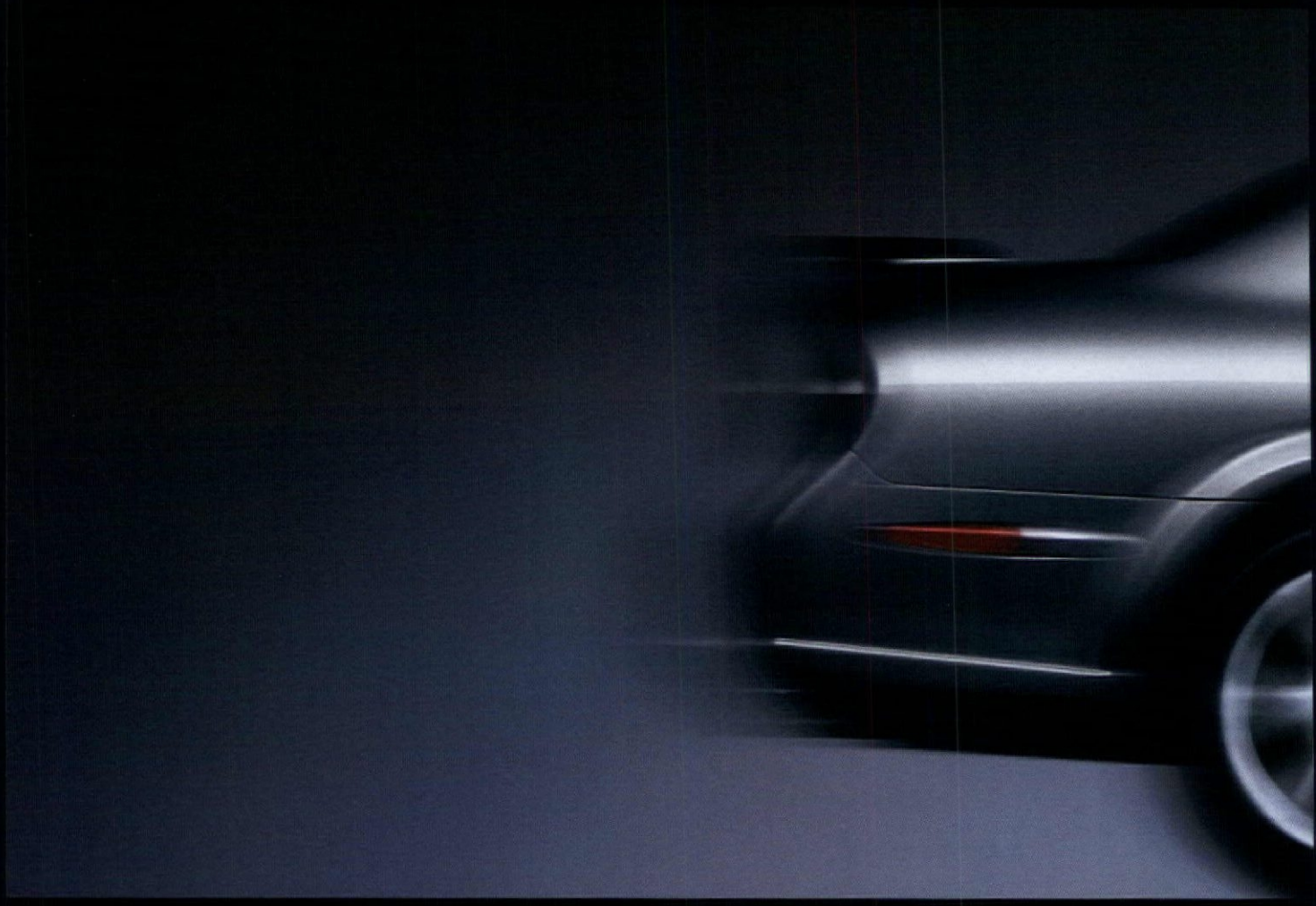


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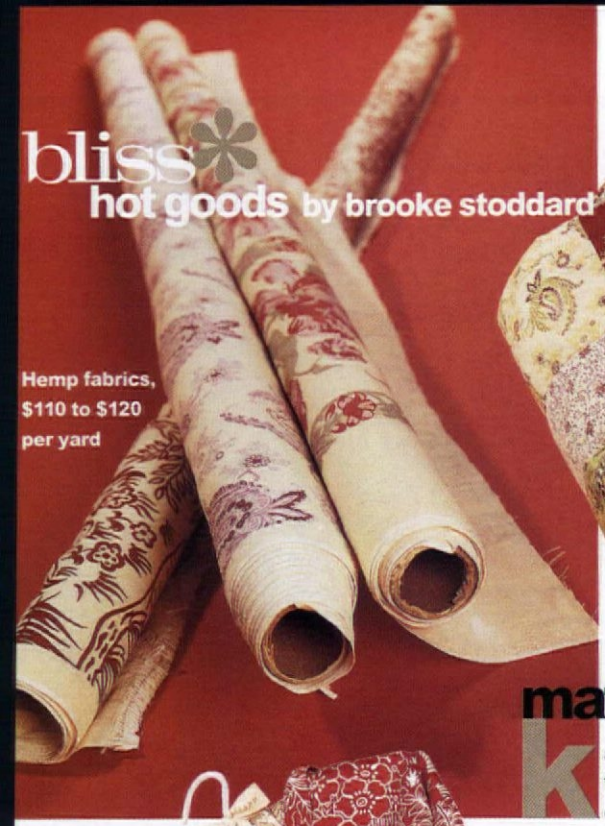


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hot goods by brooke stoddard



Hemp fabrics, $110 to $120 per yard



Patchwork quilt, $2,990



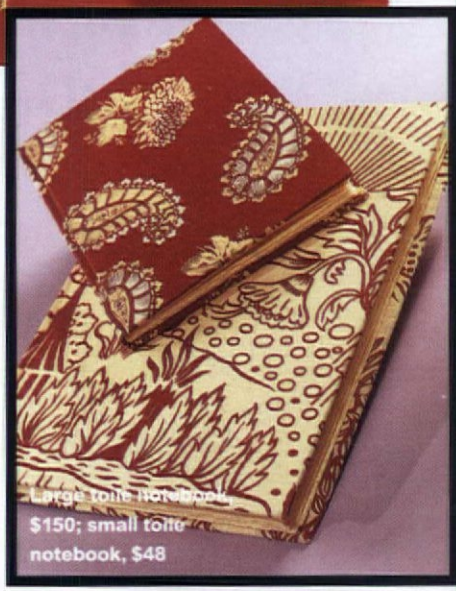
Hand-painted tray, $285

material girl

Kathryn Ireland's motto could be "Fabrics first." They are the basis for the rooms she designs for her private clients. And they're also the raison d'être for her eponymous three-year-old boutique (1118 Montana Ave., Santa Monica, CA; 310-393-0670), which is brimming with cheerful, hand-printed hemp linens, hemp silks, and hemp cottons, produced in nearby Santa Barbara. Her favorite colors in her palette are "my red" and lavender (the color of her grade-school uniform). She creates everything from bold florals and checks to paisleys and toiles "that are not fussy like the typical French versions," and turns them into robes, bags, hangers, quilts, and lampshades that fill the shelves of her sunny shop. (She'll customize almost anything for a client, too.) Her fresh, feminine accessories are absolutely right for a casual American beach house or a traditional English home, which has people murmuring that Ireland is the



Robe, $495



Large toile notebook, $150; small toile notebook, $48



Green toile hemp totebag, $195



Hangers, $12.50 each



Small floral lampshade, $95; tassel, $250 for a pair

bliss.com

a site for sore eyes

WHO Usha Subramaniam, founder of ICON20

WHAT A new Web site (www.icon20.com) and gallery/auction house in New York's Chelsea art district (515 West 20th Street; 212-769-4441) that aims to be the leading resource for shopping and scholarship for 20th-century decorative arts.

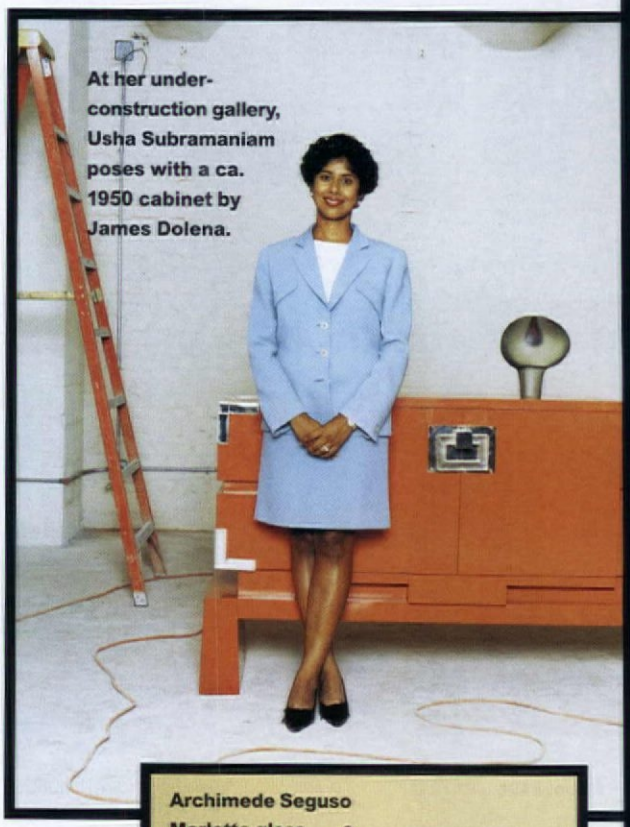
WHY Because the charismatic Subramaniam has been on the fast track since joining Christie's in 1989. Because as the New York head of Phillips's 20th-century decorative arts department, she made *Art & Auction*'s 1998 Power List (along with MoMA's Kirk Varnedoe and Microsoft's Bill Gates). Because she recruited a group of investors (the type of people who have paid $1.87 million for a Tiffany lamp) to finance her venture.

HOW By being indefatigable and ambitious. Subramaniam, who once flew to Israel for dinner (!) to secure a consignment, is enlisting hot young talents, like architect Ali Tayar to help design her gallery and Ron Ryan to design her Web site. She plans to offer an on-line worldwide calendar of events and exhibitions, and an encyclopedia of 20th-century design.

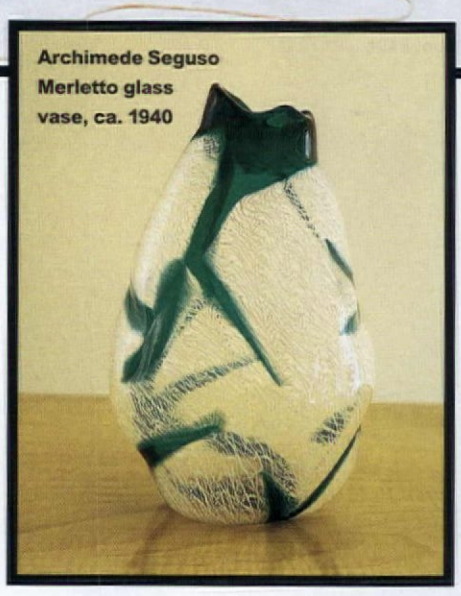
WHEN In early December she will wield the gavel at ICON20's first live auction, which will include Piero Fornasetti's 1950 transfer-print-and-gilt trumeau and Carlo Bugatti's 1902 parchment-and-copper Snail chair. You can preview the sale on-line right now.—D.S.



A Ruhlmann lamp, ca. 1932, and a pair of Venini obelisks, ca. 1950, atop an André Arbus secrétaire, ca. 1940



At her under-construction gallery, Usha Subramaniam poses with a ca. 1950 cabinet by James Dolena.



Archimede Seguso Merletto glass vase, ca. 1940

E-DITORS' CHOICE

the pick of the crop

Apple's new Cinema Display monitor will transform your desktop. Measuring 12 by 18.5 inches, the rectangular screen, part of the new PowerMac G4 system, is big enough to display two full-size pages of text simultaneously. It's also ideal for watching a DVD as the director intended—no letterboxing or image cropping to mar your viewing. The fluid metallic styling, evocative of computer-generated morphing effects seen in sci-fi blockbusters, begs the question: Which design is more impressive, the machine or the digital effects it creates? —RYAN MATHENY





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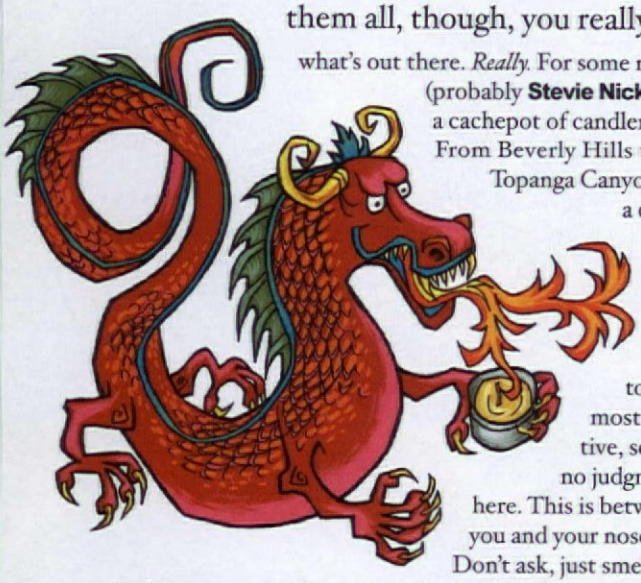
by paul fortune





a scentimental education

As if you hadn't noticed, there's been a quotidian proliferation of designer candles. Every frock maker and pot thrower is dipping her own highly scented wick into the ever-expanding tallow market. Even if you think you've seen them all, though, you really need to take one more look at what's out there. *Really.* For some reason (probably **Stevie Nicks**), L.A. is a cachepot of candlemakers. From Beverly Hills to Topanga Canyon, there's a candle for *everyone!* Of all the senses, smell has to be the most subjective, so I make no judgments here. This is between you and your nose: Don't ask, just smell.



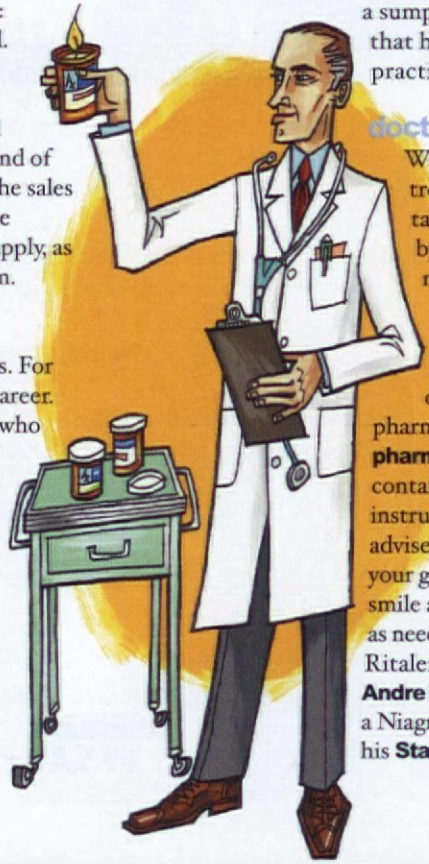
At the upper echelon, we have design doyenne **Rose Tarlow**'s exotic, operatic collection, which includes **Salome**, a sensuous mix of patchouli, sandalwood, and lavender (comes on a platter—just joking); **Lucia**, a blend of hyacinth and amber; and **Isolde**, a floral ravishment. The sales benefit a breast cancer treatment fund. The candles are available only at **Maxfield**, but they're often in short supply, as every Hollywood star who shops there has to have them.

match game

Ex-models and -actresses don't have to become realtors. For several, candlemaking has become a lucrative second career. The most successful example has to be **Lynette Reed**, who turned a $3,000 investment into a $3-million-a-year business. Her store, Illume, sells only candles and has garnered a huge Hollywood clientele, including **Cameron Diaz**, **Puff Daddy**, **Barbra Streisand**, and **Ellen DeGeneres**. Her stock features such clever gift ideas as a candle of the month (December is Woods) and Chinese zodiac candles (2000, the Year of the Dragon, is Amber, for the confident nonconformist). **Maura Peters** and **Cameron Hall** fled the runway and started a bath-products line called **Body Preserves** two years ago, and recently added a range of candles named **Wick•ed** (geddit?). These two have gone for a hippie-chic look. All the candles are hand-poured and supersaturated with essential and fragrance oils like cucumber, pear, and honeysuckle. Their aromatherapy line includes **Jenna Elfman**'s favorite, Marley, a blend of vetiver, patchouli, bitter orange, and sandalwood.

ray of light

Want to know what candle **Madonna** insisted on burning in her trailer when shooting her latest flick, *The Next Best Thing*? Sources very close to her at the time (sorry, can't tell) say **Votivo**'s red currant candle was her choice. This small Seattle-based company is the passion of one **Edgar Lee**, who eschews chemicals and fragrance libraries. He has created scents that evoke rain, deserts, and, my favorite, teak, a sumptuous ecclesiastical aroma that had this ex–altar boy practically genuflecting.



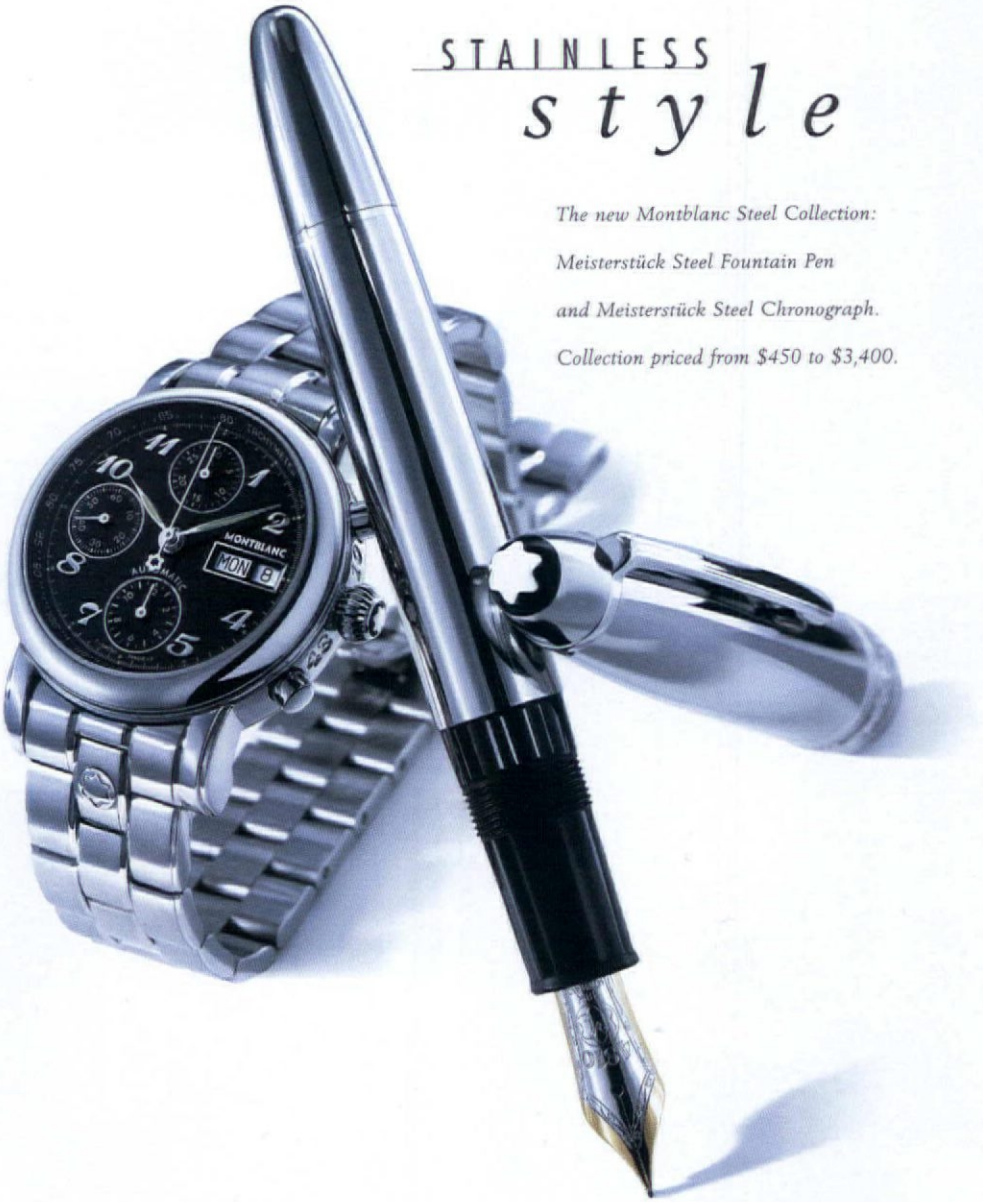
doctors feelgood

With aromatherapy the hottest trend, it wasn't long before it was taken to its wackiest conclusion by an unlikely trio of St. Paul natives turned Hollywood producers. Brothers **Duffy** and **Seamus Culligan** and **Matt Mogol** make candles designed to resemble popular pharmaceuticals. Called **aroma-pharmacy**, they come in amber glass containers with screw tops and instructive labels. With Niagra, you're advised to dim the lights and get your groove on! With Lowzac, you smile and light a candle twice a day, or as needed. Also available are Valiumello, Ritalert, Coldex, and Cramprin. **Andre Balazs** was so amused, he put a Niagra candle in every room of his **Standard Hotel** on Sunset.

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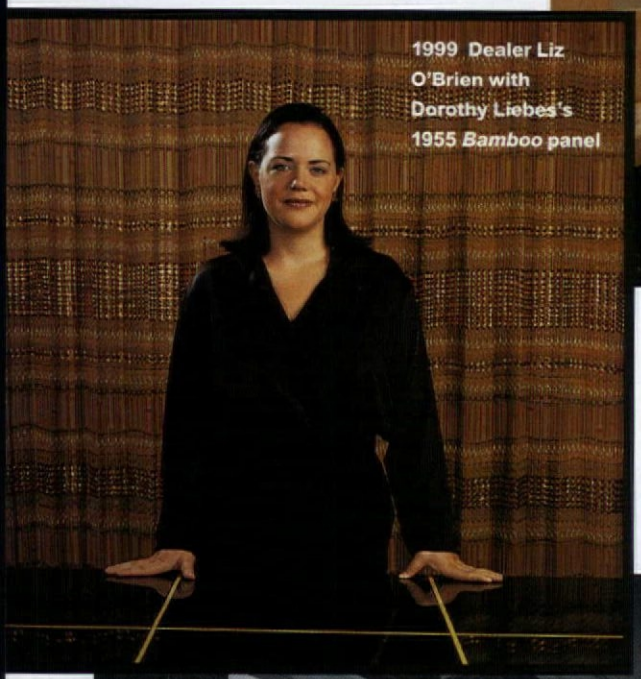
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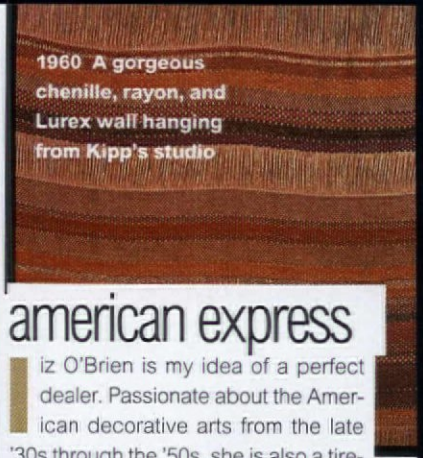
bliss then and now by carolina irving



1999 Dealer Liz O'Brien with Dorothy Liebes's 1955 *Bamboo* panel



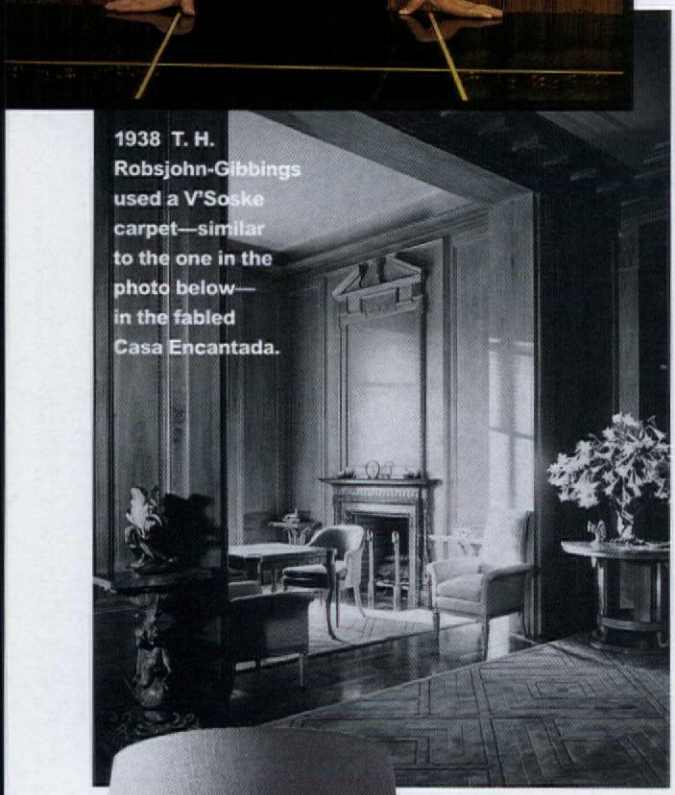
1999 A Duquette cross sits atop a bookcase from the Marx apartment.



1960 A gorgeous chenille, rayon, and Lurex wall hanging from Kipp's studio

american express

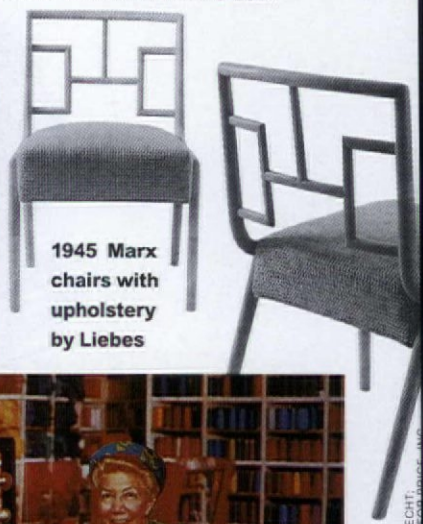
Liz O'Brien is my idea of a perfect dealer. Passionate about the American decorative arts from the late '30s through the '50s, she is also a tireless sleuth, researching the history of her beautiful acquisitions. They invariably come from a fascinating place, like the Casa Encantada in California, done by T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings. Liz's new Fifth Avenue store (in the old Pierre Cardin space) is the perfect showcase for that glorious period of American style. It's all here: the quietly elegant furniture of Chicago architect Samuel Marx, whimsical *objets* by decorating wizard Tony Duquette, plush carpets by Stanislav V'Soske. My current obsessions are a fantastic screen by legendary weaver Dorothy Liebes made of bamboo, chenille, and Lurex, and a set of blue, cream, and gold panels by Maria Kipp. They look like a giant nubby Chanel suit, shot through with metallic threads. The chic of it all! I just want to throw them on and wear them out the door.



1938 T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings used a V'Soske carpet—similar to the one in the photo below—in the fabled Casa Encantada.



1946 A Kipp panel and a 1940s Lucite stool

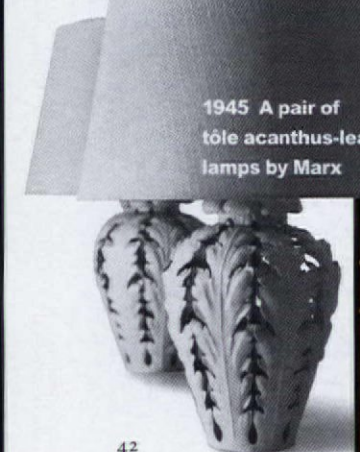


1945 Marx chairs with upholstery by Liebes

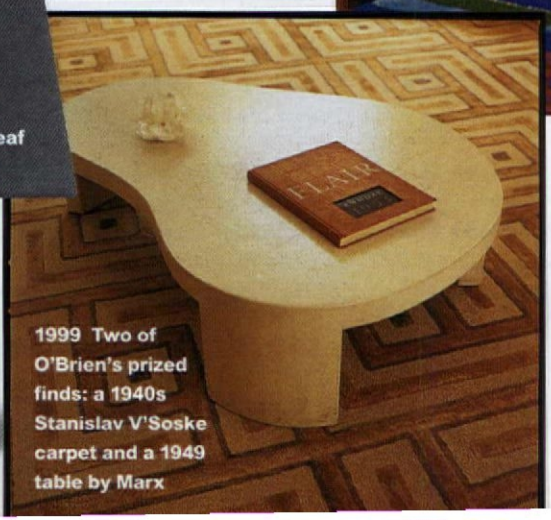


1970 "There is no such thing as bad color," said Dorothy Liebes, above, "only bad color combinations."

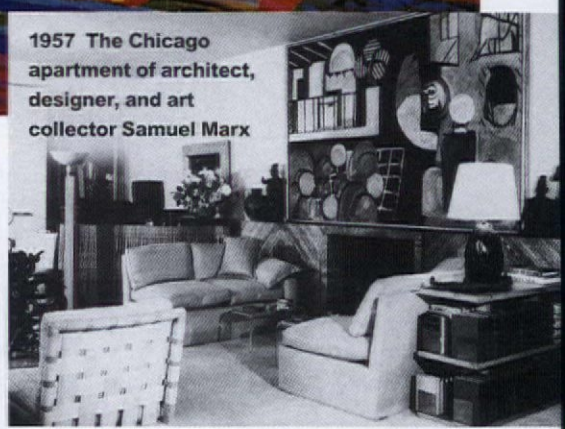
PORTRAIT AND STILL LIFE: LAURIE LAMBRECHT; HAIR AND MAKEUP: SUZETTE RODRIGUEZ FOR [illegible]



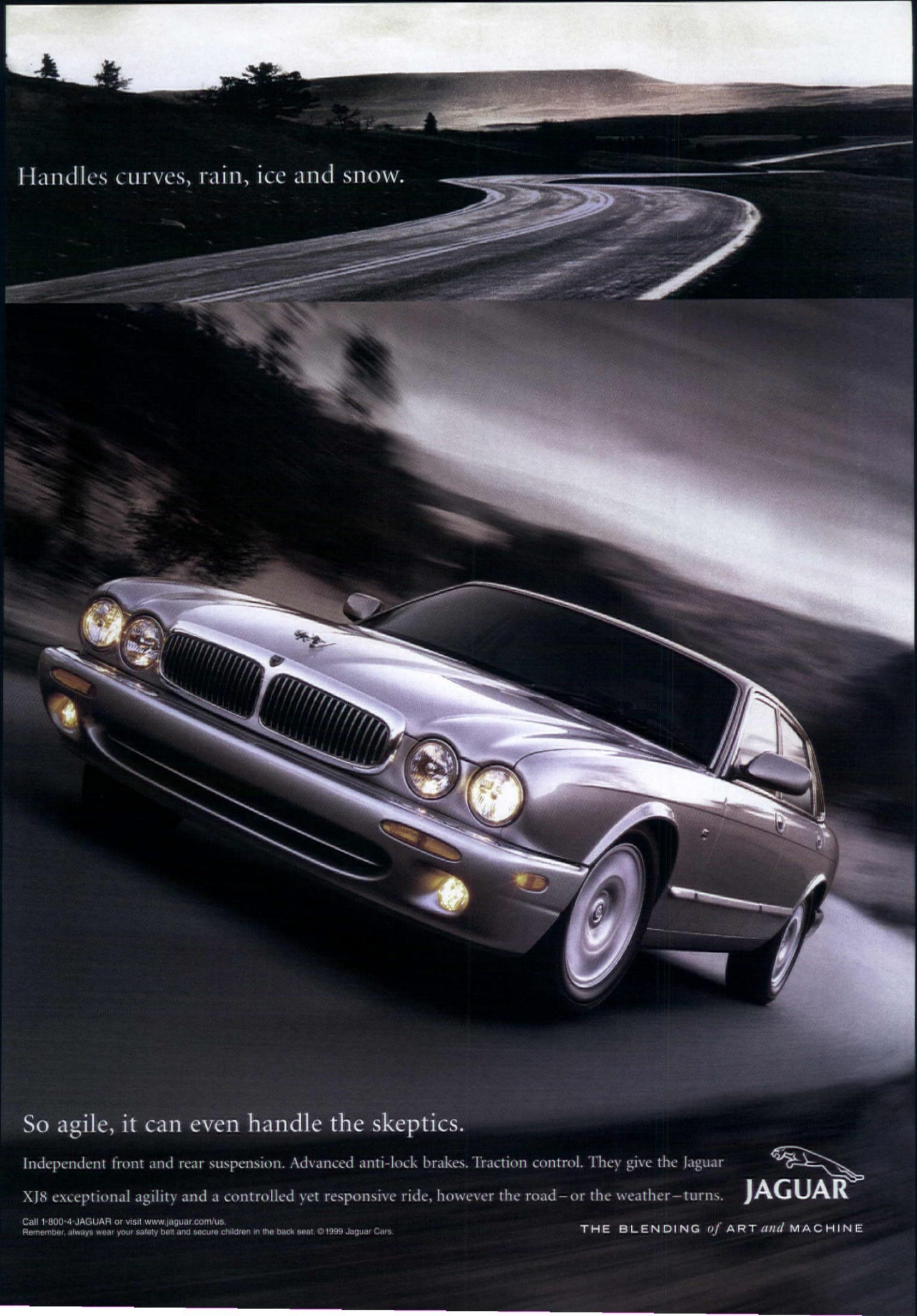
1945 A pair of tôle acanthus-leaf lamps by Marx



1999 Two of O'Brien's prized finds: a 1940s Stanislav V'Soske carpet and a 1949 table by Marx



1957 The Chicago apartment of architect, designer, and art collector Samuel Marx



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THE BLENDING *of* ART *and* MACHINE

bliss

the larder by lora zarubin



On the stovetop, I use E. Dehillerin's ***Doufeu*** (in Paris, 011-33-1-42-36-53-13). Its lid holds melted ice.

To seal my favorite **ceramic pot** from Bridge Kitchenware (in New York, 212-688-4220; 800-274-3435), I use a simple salt-crust dough.

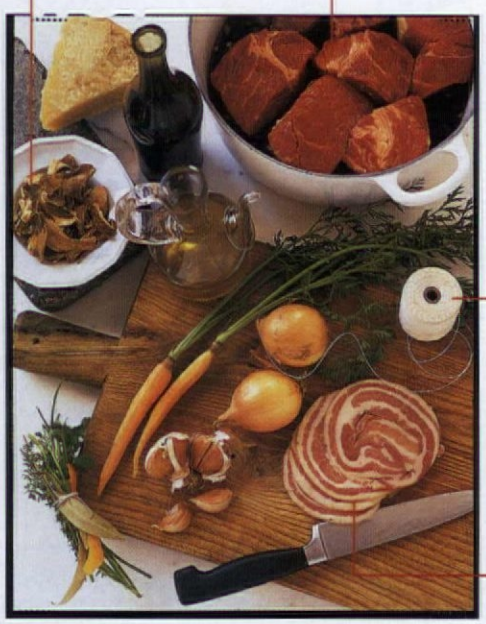
A Le Cruset **Dutch oven** with a large soup-bowl lid works just like a *Doufeu*. I fill the bowl with leftover wine, which causes the steam inside the pot to condense on the underside of the lid and fall back into the stew.

pot luck: the perfect beef daube

My favorite part of the holidays is the lazy week between Christmas and New Year's, when I have the time to cook a **beef daube**. *Made with lots of vegetables and a rich, inky wine, this classic slow-cooked stew (recipe, page 45) from Provence is the perfect winter dish to have simmering in the oven when friends and family drop by. Daube can be made in many kinds of pots, but my new must-have is Bridge Kitchenware's ceramic one that goes right into the oven. The results are fantastic. To follow the daube, I serve a fresh green salad and a little cheese. For dessert I prefer something flan-y, like a crème brûlée. Be warned: Daube is potent stuff—I've seen vegetarians succumb to a bowlful after a day at my house smelling the stew cook.*

For an earthy accent, I use dried **cèpes**—Italian porcini mushrooms—that I've soaked in warm water.

The better the **wine**, the better the stock. I marinate the meat and vegetables in a young petit syrah.



Kitchen **string** is a cook's essential. I use it to wrap the bouquets garnis and to secure the boned shanks.

Purists call for bacon, but I prefer thick-cut **pancetta**—it's less smoky and doesn't overwhelm the meat.

Traditionalists may like rice or wide noodles, but I think that elbow **macaroni** sautéed with pancetta and a little stock is heaven.

Served in a big **tureen**, like this one from Pierre Deux (in New York, 212-243-7740), daube is the ultimate winter buffet food.



A daube is a genius excuse to open a wonderful bottle of wine, like a great **Volnay** from Burgundy.

Plated stew is more elegant with whole pieces of **meat**. I start with 4-ounce cuts that don't fall apart with cooking.

bliss the larder

BEEF DAUBE (Serves 8)

STEW

4 lbs.	boned beef shank and chuck, cut into 3- to 4-oz. pieces
1 tbs.	olive oil
1	bouquet garni (4 fresh thyme branches, 2 bay leaves, 4 sprigs parsley, 1 strip of orange peel, wrapped in a 6-in. square of cheesecloth and tied with kitchen string)
4	carrots, peeled and sliced into thin discs
4	medium onions, peeled and diced
8	whole cloves garlic, peeled
1 bottle	petit syrah (or other young tannic red)
6 oz.	pancetta, thickly sliced and cut into 1/4-in. *lardons*
1 oz.	dried cèpes (porcini mushrooms), soaked, rinsed, and chopped
4	tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and diced
2 tsp.	coarse sea salt

SALT CRUST

2 cups	all-purpose flour
1 cup	salt
1/2 cup	water

PASTA

1 lb.	cooked elbow macaroni, tossed with olive oil
3 oz.	pancetta, thickly sliced, cut into 1/4-in. *lardons*
3 tbs.	chopped fresh parsley for garnish
	Parmesan cheese, freshly grated (optional)

Tie the boned beef shanks with kitchen string. In a large bowl, combine the meat, olive oil, bouquet garni, and half of the carrots, onions, and garlic. Mix well and add the red wine. Cover. Marinate for 6 hours or overnight in refrigerator, turning meat occasionally.

Preheat the oven to 250 degrees.

Strain the marinade. Reserve the meat, liquid, and bouquet garni, and discard the rest. In a large bowl, combine the marinade, bouquet garni, pancetta, cèpes, tomatoes, and the remaining carrots, onions, and garlic. Add a layer of the meat to the pot. Spoon in the marinade mixture and top with the rest of the meat. Sprinkle with coarse sea salt, set the pot on a heat diffuser over medium heat, and bring to a high simmer (this should take about 1 hour).

If you are using a traditional ceramic daube pot, prepare the salt crust by combining the flour and salt and slowly mixing in the water until it can be formed into a ball. Knead for 5 minutes; let rest.

When the daube comes to a high simmer, remove from heat. On a floured surface, roll out the dough into two thick 2-by-12-inch pieces. Place the lid on the pot and seal with the dough, pressing one roll on each side of the rim. Join the ends together with a little water, and press the dough underneath and above the lid to seal it tightly to the pot.

Bake the daube for 5 hours. (If you are using a *Doufeu* or a Dutch oven with a bowl on top, leave the pot on the burner when the stew comes to a high simmer and reduce heat to low. Fill the top with water or leftover wine and replenish as it evaporates. Cook for 6 hours.) Remove daube from the oven and let rest for 10 minutes. Then, with the back of a kitchen knife, gently break off the crust and discard.

In a large pan, sautée the cooked pasta, pancetta, and a ladleful of daube broth for 3 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley and transfer to a bowl. Transfer the daube to a tureen, remove string from meat, and serve with the noodles and freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

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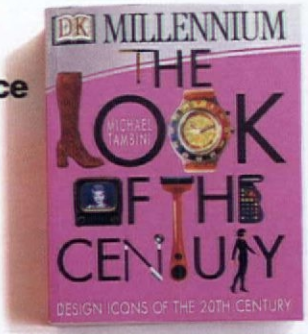
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bliss bookcase by lygeia grace

full house

In this season of plenty, the dictum "More is more" reigns, whether it's an Irish yard filled with gnomes in *Gardens of Obsession* or a New York apartment lined with old masters in *At Home with Art*. Fortunately, Mies van der Rohe's sleek towers provide a welcome respite.

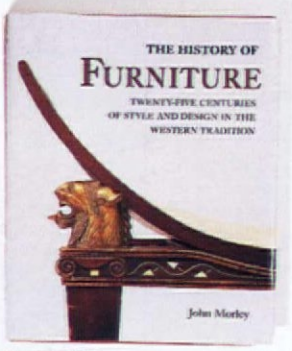




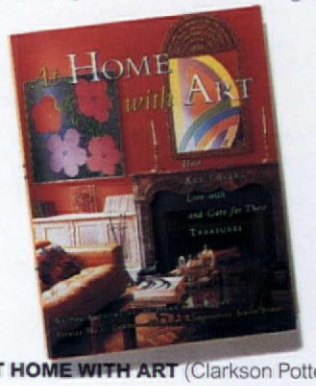
THE LOOK OF THE CENTURY (DK, $16.95) This sturdy little design survey charts the evolution of toothbrushes, refrigerators, and more—from Hoffmann's 1908 Sitzmaschine to Neudstadter's 1952 Rolodex. Millennium fatigue notwithstanding, this is a must for design junkies.



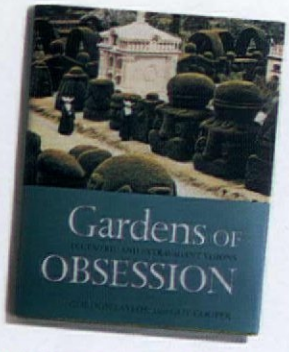
MIES VAN DER ROHE AT WORK (Phaidon, $29.95) A detailed study of the master's major works, this paperback reprint is a reminder of the optimistic spirit that guided Mies and his fellow modernists.



THE HISTORY OF FURNITURE (Bulfinch Press, $75) Fabulous pieces and extraordinary rooms complement curator John Morley's engaging text in this ambitious and highly subjective look at the Western canon.



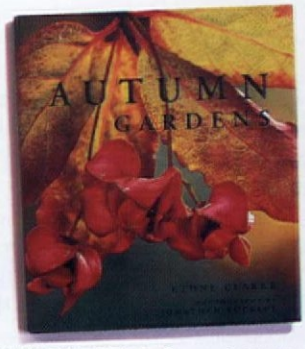
AT HOME WITH ART (Clarkson Potter, $50) Great paintings and sculpture take on more resonance in residential settings. This volume profiles those for whom living with art is less a pastime than a compulsion.



GARDENS OF OBSESSION (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, $40) A fertility sculpture garden in Bangkok and a topiary cemetery in Ecuador are just two of the astonishing stops on this garden-world romp.



THE MINIMALIST GARDEN (Monacelli, $50) The restrained spaces collected in this elegant book may not always be green, but they do impress—further proof that the minimalist garden is not an oxymoron.



AUTUMN GARDENS (Soma, $35) The photographs in Ethne Clarke's lyrical homage to fall will delight the armchair gardener. For the get-your-hands-dirty sort, there's a directory of 100 autumn plants.

REQUIRED READING global merchant terence conran's hit list

THE WORK OF CHARLES AND RAY EAMES: A LEGACY OF INVENTION (Abrams) "This is a wonderful book of illustrated essays which captures the true spirit of the Eameses' passion, philosophy, and creativity."

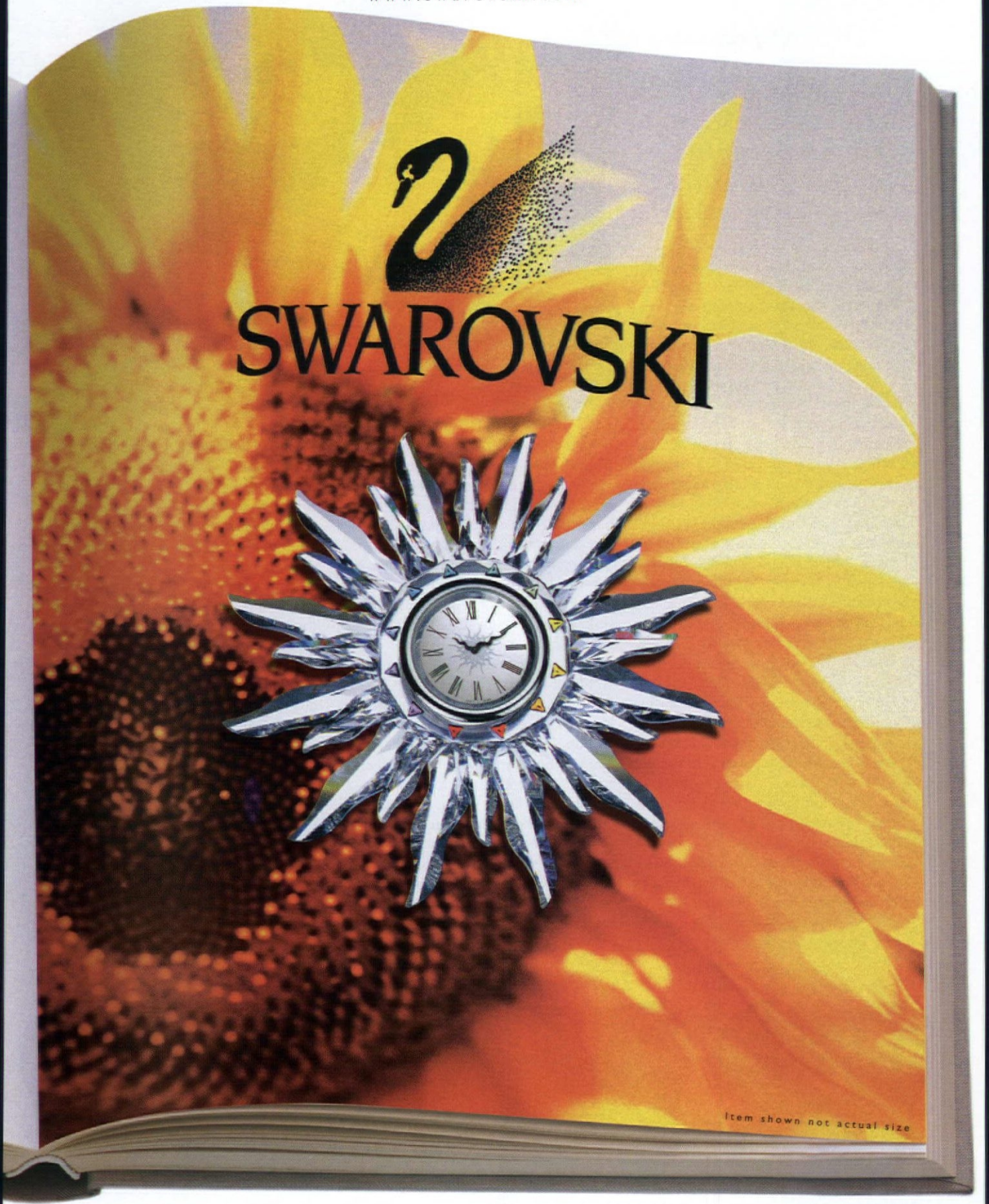
TRADITIONAL JAPANESE HOUSES (Rizzoli) "Japanese architecture is fascinating in its simplicity. The traditional houses [*minka*] in this superb collection of photographs are truly an inspiration."

JOSEPH CORNELL/MARCEL DUCHAMP . . . IN RESONANCE (Edition Cantz) "I love flicking through this selection of images that connect two of the century's most inventive artists; you tend to just lose yourself in the surreal pages."

JE SUIS LE CAHIER: THE SKETCHBOOKS OF PICASSO (The Atlantic Monthly Press) "It's great to look through the sketches that became Picasso's most famous paintings. It gives a rare insight into what Picasso was trying to achieve in his work that you just don't get from looking at the finished pieces."



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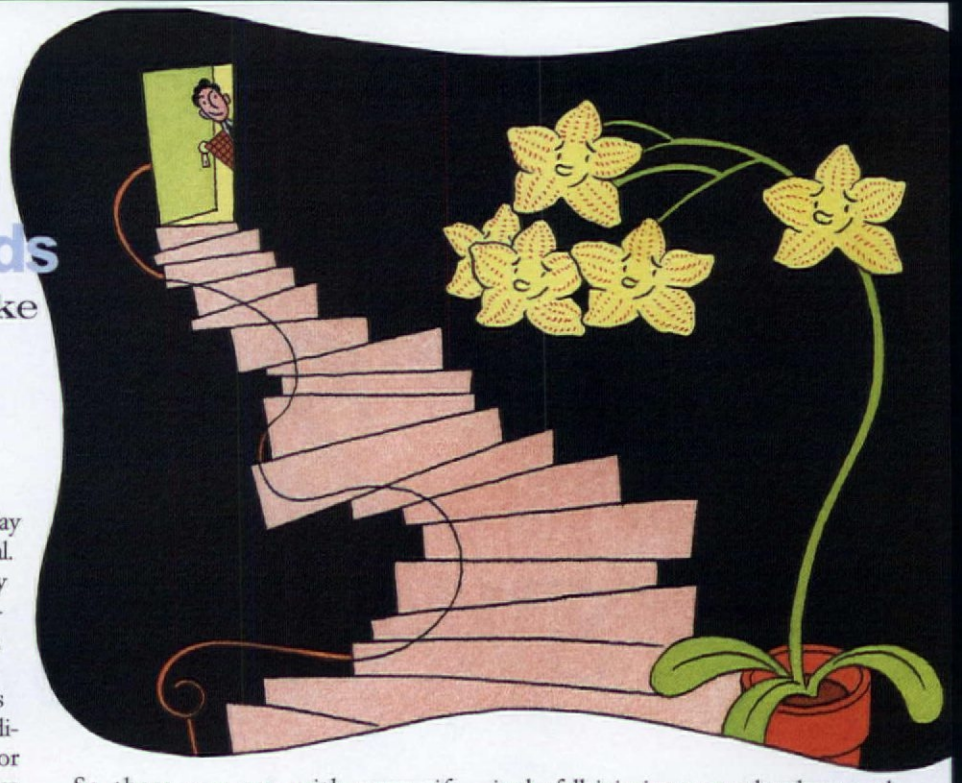


CRYSTAL SUN

garden bliss by carol king

comeback kids

Simple steps to make your moth orchid bloom for months, maybe even years



THE PROBLEM with most holiday gift plants is that they are so seasonal. In the short run, a poinsettia may be fine: it's festive, nonfattening, nonsexist, nonalcoholic. But by mid-January, the same plant is unseasonal, uninteresting, and, unfortunately, undead. It's the Ghost of Christmas Past. A less traditional plant such as the phalaenopsis, or "moth orchid," is a great present because it will still be beautiful in January and February and, if you attend to it, for some months to come. Parked in an elegant cachepot, a blooming orchid is a tribute to your taste and to your horticultural talent. I mean, I have bought budded-up phalaenopsis in November that have bloomed beautifully on the same flower spike, through no fault of my own, well into June. But when the last blossom falls off, Beauty becomes, in the words of one of my orchid-growing friends, "an ugly little bugger."

You have several options with out-of-bloom orchids. You can harden your heart and chuck them. Or you can board your orchids at a greenhouse until they come into bloom again. Or you can stow an easy-care orchid such as the phalaenopsis on a windowsill, hidden among other houseplants, until it reblooms. Unlike other orchids, phalaenopsis are fairly foolproof and will rebloom eventually, and sometimes more than once a year; but first their simple but specific needs must be met.

So there you are, with your gift phalaenopsis, consisting of a couple of fertilizer-spotted leaves and a spike or two of really good-looking flowers and a number of buds. Don't worry too much about growing conditions at first; display your phalaenopsis in a location where it can be admired but where it won't freeze or fry. Water the potting medium in the kitchen sink when it is almost dry, but don't get water down in the base of the leaves. After a month, the orchid will probably still look fabulous, but it's time to start treating it like a real plant. Phalaenopsis like the same conditions as African violets, and do well in bright indirect light. An east or west window, or several feet away from a south-facing window, is fine.

When the flowers finally fall off, some orchid owners consign their phalaenopsis to fluorescent lights in the basement until they send out new flower spikes. Or, with just an orchid or two, you can mix them in with houseplants that like the same conditions.

When the days begin to grow shorter in the fall, it is time to get the plants ready to rebloom. The temperature in your house will probably drop 10 degrees at night; if not, you can crack a window to cool things down a bit. This will help trigger bud formation. Or else it won't. An orchid that began life in a greenhouse may take a year to acclimate itself to your house. Don't take it personally. The following year you'll probably get more flowering spikes than you started with.

Orchids were once as rare and expensive as, well, orchids, but now they are affordable and everywhere. When checking out of my local superstore the other day, I stood behind a woman who was buying a can of paint, a sump pump, and a phalaenopsis covered with lunar-moth-like blossoms. She said that the three phalaenopsis she had at home rebloomed regularly and were as easy to grow as philodendrons. So if somebody gives you a phalaenopsis this season, don't be afraid to give it a try. You have a much better chance of getting it to rebloom than you will of getting poinsettia leaves to turn red again.

many happy returns *Your orchid plant can be the gift that keeps giving* —STEPHEN ORR



1. As soon as it's spent, cut the flower stem off above the second node from the bottom. This activates a second bloom spike.



2. Keep watering, humidity, and light consistent for the next several months. In the fall, a 10-degree drop at night will help buds form.



3. Fertilize lightly and regularly, or use time-release orchid fertilizer. Follow specific label instructions.



4. When spike appears, stake it at 4 inches high, and then again at 8 inches.



A MAN WASN'T

A MAN

UNLESS HE COULD

FIX THINGS AROUND

THE HOUSE.

MARTINIS,

FOR INSTANCE.



A brilliant descendant of the days of silver ice tongs and dinner jackets, our Rooster Cocktail Shaker was inspired by the 1928 original. Crafted identically, in spun brass with a rich silver plating, 'tis merely one of a zillion intriguing gift ideas you'll uncover. We're nothing short of wit and wisdom this holiday season. Shop our stores, catalogue or that newfangled online thing. Call 800.982.2084 or shop online at www.RestorationHardware.com.

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AMUSE YOURSELF
Slinky, $5, and compass, $8, Restoration Hardware, 888-243-9720; yo-yo, $15, Jenny Armit Design & Decorative Arts, Inc., 323-782-9173; set of three Christofle silver dice, $60, Pavillon Christofle, 877-PAVILLON; polished sterling silver Classic knife, $90, by Swiss Army, 800-442-2706; all surround a 1986 TAG Heuer stopwatch.

play time

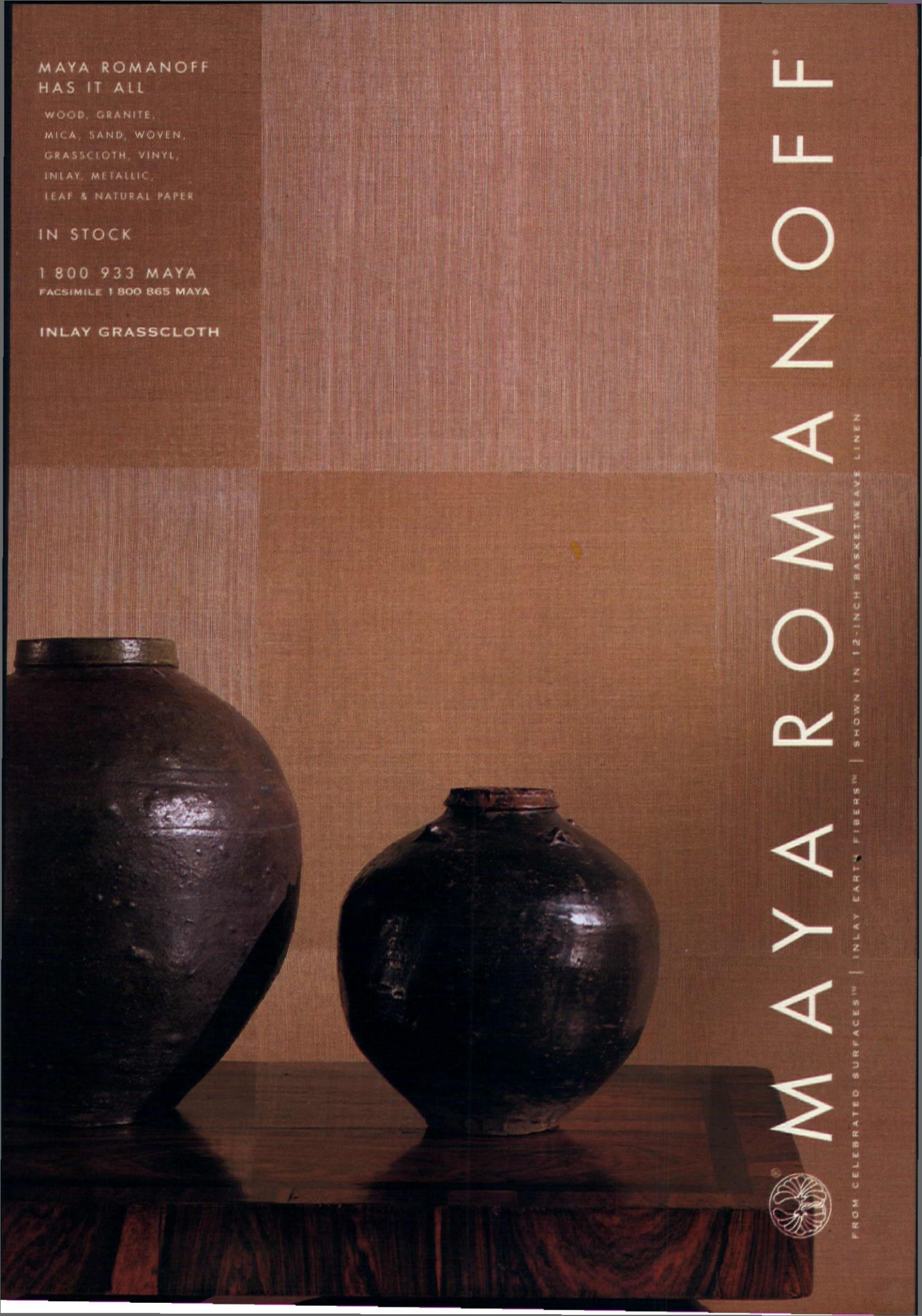
Toys are for tots. They're also for the **young at heart**. For those who want to bring back a bit of childhood, we've found new interpretations of our favorite playthings. There are nickel **yo-yos**, **sterling bubble blowers**, and the classic **Slinky**, which needed no improvement. This time, remember to share.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB HIEMSTRA PRODUCED BY NEWELL TURNER



TURNS OUT IT'S POSSIBLE to nurture both the kid within and a taste for luxury in a single play date. Everywhere we look we're finding grown-up versions of childhood favorites. What's a sleek nickel yo-yo doing amid the contemporary furniture at Jenny Armit's Design & Decorative Arts store in Los Angeles? "I suppose I'm childish, really," admits Armit, who stresses that hers

SILVER CHARMS **The Padova Bubble Blower, $125, designed by Elsa Peretti exclusively for Tiffany & Co. 800-526-0649. Sterling silver traveling paint box, $2,375, from Asprey & Garrard, comes with watercolor paints and a silver-handled brush. 800-883-2777.**


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is a "chic designer yo-yo." With a sterling silver Swiss Army knife, your scout will be well prepared for any situation. For the artistic boy or girl of any age, Asprey & Garrard offers a sterling silver traveling watercolor set that will make even stick figures seem sophisticated. (And their silver-handled jump rope might inspire you to learn double Dutch.) When you're done, you can blow

TEA TIME **Sterling silver noisemaker, $300, Tiffany & Co. Sterling silver Trianon teaspoon, $75, and child-sized silver-plate teapot, $19.99 for the service, Fortunoff. 800-FORTUNOFF. Golf tee, $250, Asprey & Garrard. Marbles, $11 a jar, Restoration Hardware.**



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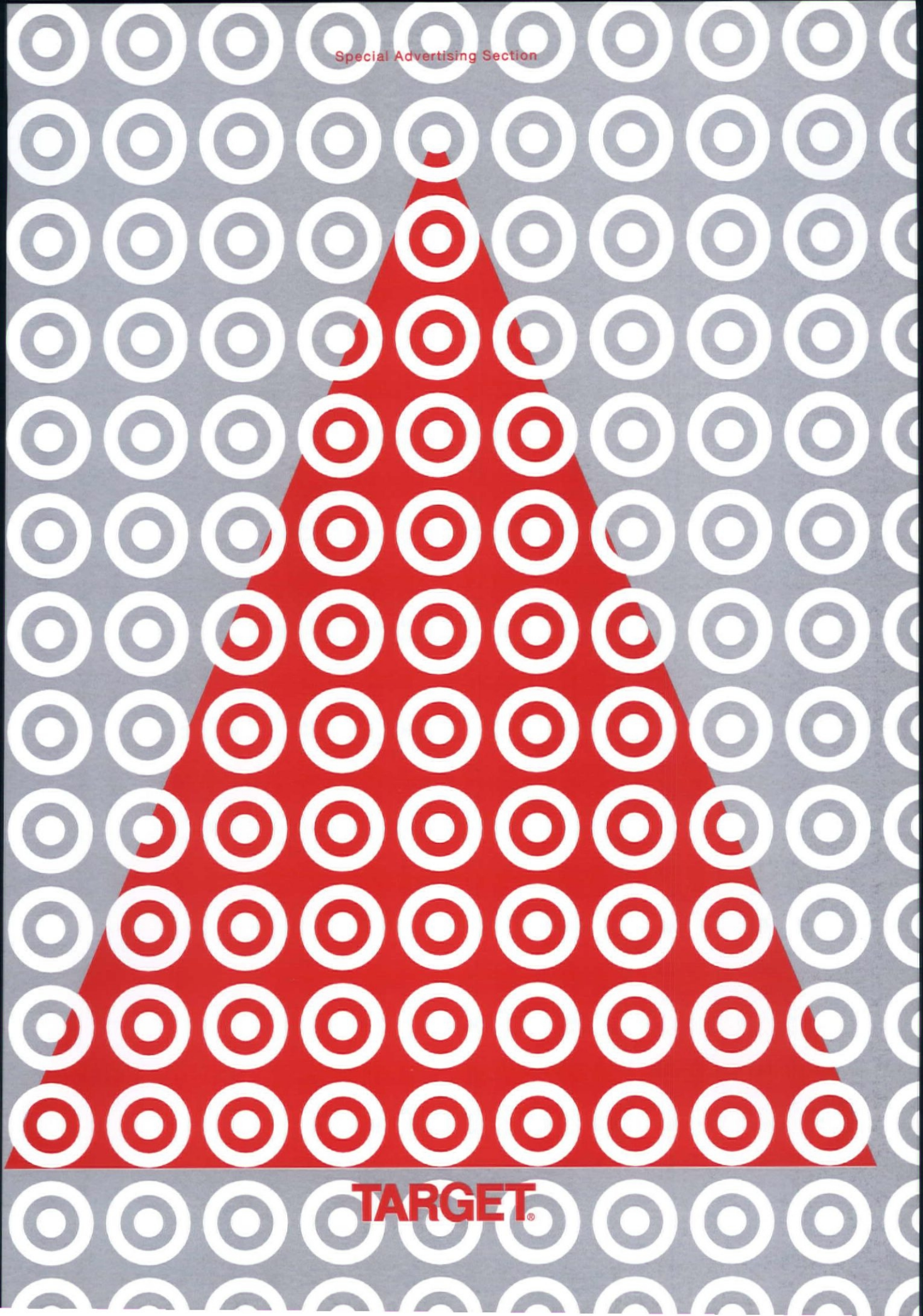
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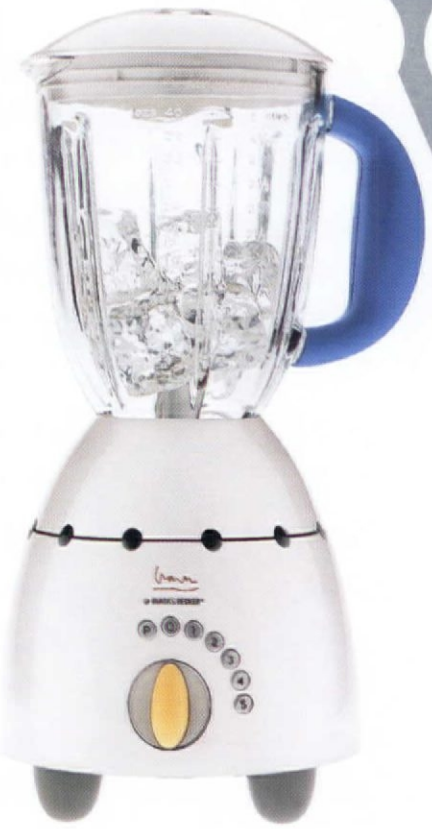


away your troubles with Elsa Peretti's Padova Bubble Blower from Tiffany & Co.—it clearly outshines the five-and-dime model. Finally, try livening up a New Year's Eve bash with Tiffany's sterling silver noisemaker. Just remember: It's all fun and games. —SABINE ROTHMAN

PLAY BALL **Are the Williams sisters on your holiday gift list? Bet that Serena and Venus will adore this sterling silver tennis ball holder, $5,300, from Bulgari. 800-BULGARI. For the type-A multitasker who has just about everything, this leather jump rope with sterling silver handles, $3,550, is a luxury portable gym. From Asprey & Garrard. Sources, see back of book.**


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Gift Wish No. 1

Blender from Michael Graves Design™
For the artful kitchen, a stylish blender that's wonderfully practical, too. 400 watts with five speeds, pulse and 40-oz. glass jar.
Only at Target. $59.99



Gift Wish No. 2

Ice bucket from Michael Graves Design™
From the acclaimed architect and designer, a cool, frosted acrylic ice bucket reflecting his signature style. Hinged lid and stainless steel tongs. Only at Target. $29.99

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Gift Wish No. 3

Tiffany-style lamp from Robert Abbey
A table lamp to treasure, pairing traditional elements with strong design. Stained glass shade, adjustable boom arm and warm bronze patina finish. Only at Target.
$79.99



Gift Wish No. 4

Wall clock from Michael Graves Design™
Simple in form yet endlessly appealing.
Cut-out face has a soft brushed aluminum
finish. Only at Target. $39.99

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Gift Wish No. 5

Osiris kettle from Bodum

Simply perfect 2-qt. stainless steel kettle is the quintessential blend of form and function. Nicely balanced, with highly polished finish and cool-touch handle.

$39.99



Gift Wish No. 6

Caffettiera coffee maker from Bodum
Handsome 8-cup coffee maker with heat-resistant glass carafe and chrome stand. Just steep, press and pour to discover richer, more flavorful coffee. $29.99

Advertisement



Gift Wish No. 7

Reindeer candelabra

Oh, deer, how they shine! Polished silvertone candelabra to highlight your holiday gatherings. Use singly or in pairs. Only at Target.

$14.99 each



Gift Wish No. 8

Polished silvertone tray

Elegantly simple serving tray is polished to a high gloss and accented with gently curved handles. A stunning addition to your dinner table or your decor.

$24.99

Advertisement



Gift Wish No. 9

Earthenware from Italy

Party perfect, star-struck serving pieces in blue, red or green to complement our Galaxy dinnerware. Only at Target.

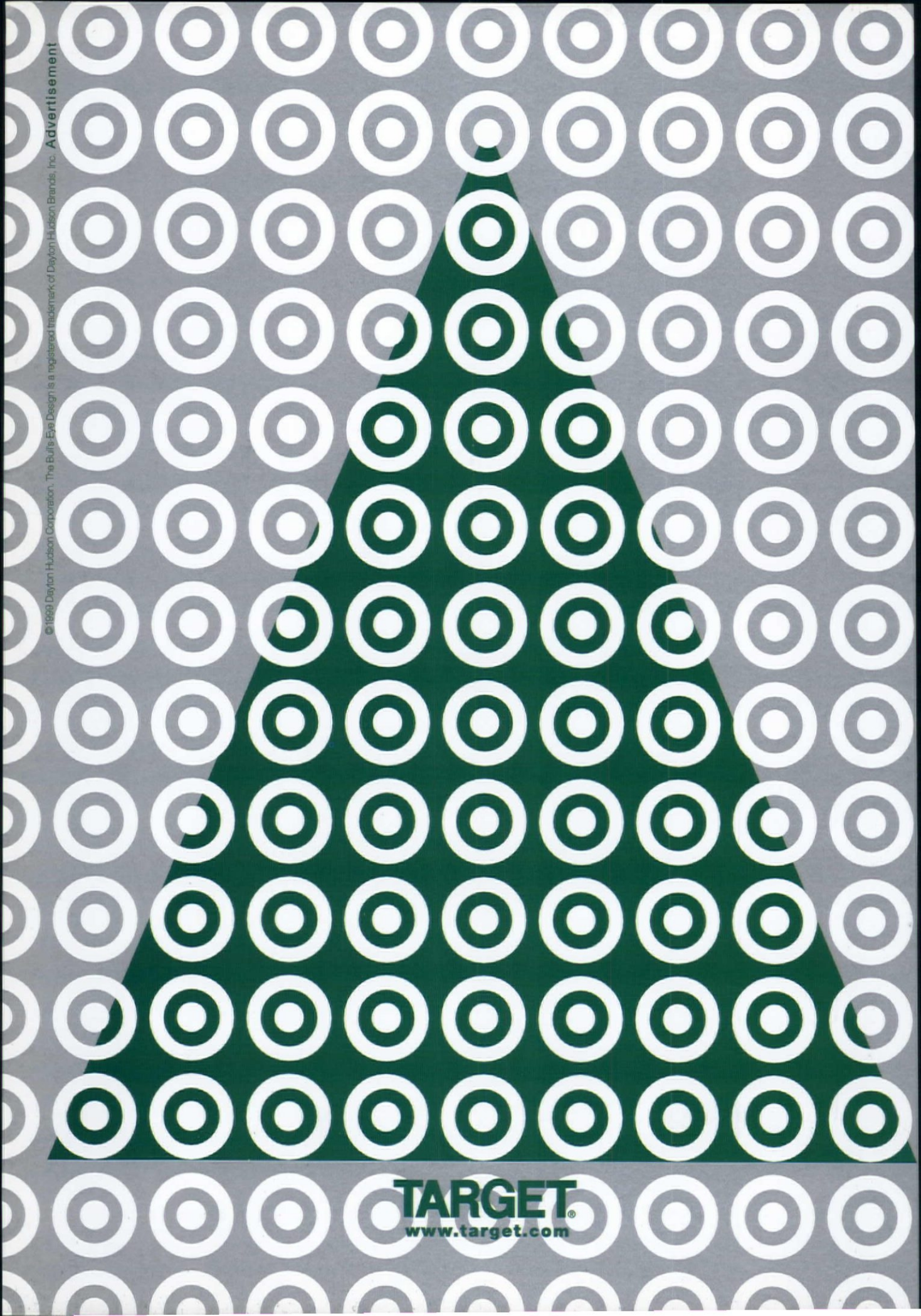
$29.99 each



Gift Wish No. 10

Velvet wine bags

Wrapsody in blue, red and green.
Chenille-trimmed velvet bags with braided
and tasseled ties are almost too
pretty to give away.
$5.99 each


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The Home-Enthusiasts' Guide to the Internet

Special Advertising Section



Hornbill Man
created by a Lobi artist
from Burkina Faso

holiday hitlist

> **Distinctive baskets from Asia, Africa and Central America, $25-$800.**

> **Tibetan crewelwork, Rajasthani silk brocade, hand-dyed cotton from Mali, hungarian felt applique, Turkish killim, and Chinese silk pillows $25-$120.**

> **Moroccan lanterns, $60-$120.**

> **Country stool from China, $70.**

> **Folding rocker from Costa Rica, $450.**

eziba.com

SHOPPER'S BAZAAR

Perhaps you can't make it to Venice this year to pick up some of those exquisite perfume bottles you've always coveted. And a trek to the Himalayas to find a pashmina shawl may not be practical at the moment. But you can own these exotically beautiful things — and give the impression that you've scoured the world's marketplaces — without leaving your living room. eZiba.com, an innovative online source for authentic handcrafted goods, is an aspiring bazaar-shopper's dream. It's the ultimate marriage of high-tech convenience and old-world craftsmanship.

Named for the Persian word for "beautiful," eZiba.com offers an ever-changing inventory of fine home furnishings, clothing, accessories, art, artifacts and objets from around the world. Its homepage headline sums up its aesthetic criteria: "Every Object Tells a Story."

On eZiba.com, you can meet the artists themselves, such as the potters of the remote village of Cocucho in Mexico. You can discover the source of an artist's inspiration by clicking on, for example, the lanterns of Marrakesh. And you can learn the function of an object in its native culture. "eZiba is a doorway to the cultures of the world," explains co-founder Amber Chand.

eZiba's buyers are experts in sourcing artisan-made international goods, and its breadth of inventory is outstanding. Thanks to stringent editing, only the finest examples of hand-made work will find their way to the site. You'll find ceramic teapots from Morocco, hand-wrought silver from Bali, hand-made paper from Nepal, gold-embroidered silk wedding saris from Rajasthan, hand-blown glass from the Maltese island of Gozo, and hundreds of other fascinating objects.

Along with its exceptional retail collection, eZiba.com also features online auctions of rare and unusual objects in themed collections such as Native American jewelry, Russian icons, Chinese paintings and Himalayan art.

The site's "storefront" includes a home page introducing new, topical and seasonal products, along with related stories. A keyword-search feature enables the shopper or collector to locate a particular product, category, region or price range. Finally, a clickable world map allows the shopper to "visit" any region and explore its products.

eZiba.com

What in the world?

himalayan masks

moroccan teapots

mexican tile fountains

baltic amber necklaces

tibetan temple stones

syrian tables

thai rain drums

italian majolica

navajo bracelets

czech wooden toys

peruvian alpaca throws

chinese snuff bottles

american rag dolls

guatemalan bottle cap art

russian lacquerware

paraguayan leather bags



Rainforest Baskets
These baskets are woven by the Wounaan, a people of the remote rainforests of Panama and Colombia. Dyed with plant extracts, they are decorated with centuries-old geometric designs as well as bird and insect motifs.

eZiba.com

experience the world one object at a time

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holiday hitlist

- Fabulously luxurious silks and brocades with tailored flannels and linens
- Bolder scaled patterns
- Breezy American style
- Rediscovery of pastels
- Upholstered walls



The Lennox Settee

scalamandre.com

DESIGN ON DEMAND

Choosing textiles, trimmings, wallpaper and furniture can be an overwhelming experience, even with a decorator to help. Imagine how much easier it would be to browse through selections from your home or office computer. Now you can do just that with scalamandre.com, the venerable home furnishings company's brand new website.

The site serves both the design trade and consumers by providing detailed information about each collection, a how-to on ordering merchandise, exciting house tours, inspiring restoration projects and a history of the 70-year-old firm.

Scalamandré's long-standing to-the-trade-only policy is still enforced. Designers are asked to e-mail their requests for memo samples and/or place orders by entering existing account numbers. Consumers, however, are not shut out of the process. Scalamandré has made it easier for the general public to shop their extraordinary line by working with the A.S.I.D (The American Society of Interior Decorators) to provide the names of respected decorators in their area who can make the actual purchases for them.

Scalamandre was founded in 1929 by Franco Scalamandré, an Italian immigrant. His first major commission was to produce six yards of an elaborate brocatelle for William Randolph Hearst. From its humble beginnings, Scalamandré has grown to become one of the most respected home furnishings houses in the world, known for its elaborate attention to quality in every detail.

Scalamandré, which provides an extraordinary selection of first-quality fabrics such as fine silk wovens, printed textiles, passementerie, wallpapers and trimmings to virtually every distinguished designer in the country, now offers a collection of new styles and contemporary prints, carpets—and, most recently, a line of furniture.

For more information, please call 800-932-4361 or visit www.scalamandre.com.



Scalamandré

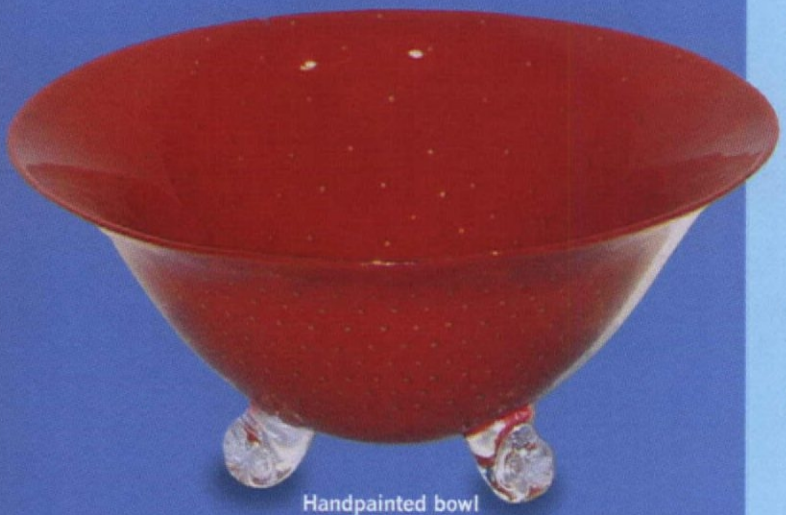


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Handpainted bowl
from Dahne & Weinstein

holiday hitlist

- > Handpainted Bowl, from Dahne & Weinstein. $100 (pictured left)
- > "The Watering Can" Coffee Service, from Essential Settings. $100.
- > Ringoletto Vases, from Bo Danica. Large, 9.5" vase - $149. Small, 7.5" vase - $125.
- > Millenium Clown from Scully & Scully. Made in Italy, $285.
- > Calf Boots, from R.J.'s Boot Company. Styles range from $1,295 to $1,995. (pictured below)

giftemporia.com

UNIQUELY CHIC

Imagine being able to shop popular, cutting-edge boutiques like those on Rodeo Drive and Madison Avenue with the click of the mouse. Now you can with giftemporia.com, where the old fashion shopping experience meets the new age zeitgeist.

Founded by Nancy Huang (former White House Assistant to President George Bush, and later a personal aide to Mrs. Bush), giftemporia.com links shoppers to exclusive stores all over the country. The online store was born from Huang's experience as a prospective bride, when she found herself registering at chain stores rather than the one-of-a-kind boutiques she prefers. "I ended up registering for things that really didn't represent my style—they weren't special," Huang explains.

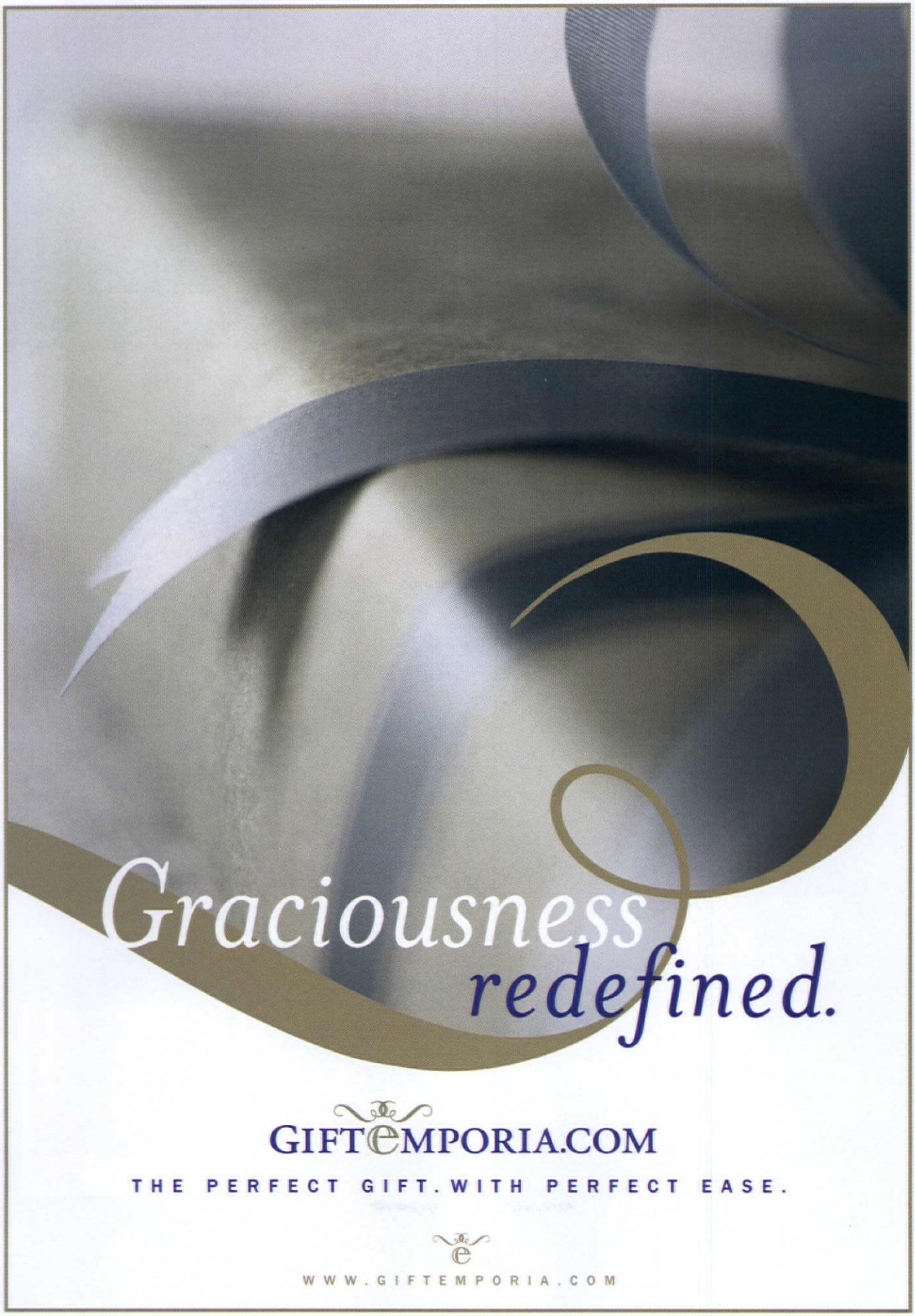
The upside is that Huang's brainchild will ensure that other brides will receive gifts that truly reflect their personal style. The site focuses on gift registries and wish lists, not just for weddings, but for other special occasions as well. Each customer receives a free web page he or she can use as a registry for weddings, birthdays, new babies or a new home.

giftemporia.com brings shoppers everything from the classics at Geary's in Beverly Hills to the very latest in gift ideas from RJ Boots in Texas (owner Rocky Carroll has made boots for four presidents). Le Chien in New York, where Elizabeth Taylor is a regular customer, is also online through giftemporia.com.

In the true spirit of user-friendliness, customers can search to find the perfect gift by city, by gift category and by topic. For example, if your sister loves butterfly motifs, you can enter that keyword and everything featuring butterflies will be listed. Giftemporia.com also provides ideas, event planning tips and tools for every occasion.



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Millennium Extravaganza Snow Globe

holiday hitlist

- > "Millenium Magic," three rollicking snowman ornament. $32
- > "Happy Handful," Jolly Santa with colorful gift ornament. $36
- > "Times Square," new millenium ornament. $39
- > "Beefeater Bear," Teddy Bear in English attire ornament. $42
- > "Rocking Cracker," nutcracker on a rocking horse ornament. $42

christopherradko.com

HOLIDAY DAZZLE

Once again, the holidays are upon us. It's time to start selecting gifts, and perhaps more importantly, it's time to start thinking about what your tree will look like this year. All the best-dressed Christmas trees this holiday season will have one thing in common—they'll be gleaming with distinctive and dazzling hand-made ornaments from Christopher Radko. And now this collection of heirloom-quality ornaments can be seen all together on the Christopher Radko website–christopherradko.com.

From its inception 14 years ago, this holiday ornament firm has been dressing the trees and homes of the most discerning holiday revelers, including Katharine Hepburn, Robert De Niro, Elton John, Barbra Streisand, Whoopi Goldberg and Arnold Schwarzenegger. This Christmas, they've added the Radko Online Store, where shoppers can buy selected discontinued ornaments, designs originally created for charity auctions, and the collectible "United for Peace" design.

Anyone who purchases the "United for Peace" ornament at a retail location or online will be eligible for a sweepstakes. All sweepstakes participants will have the opportunity to win the entire collection of new "Year 2000" glass ornaments from Christopher Radko.

Since his first 50-piece collection in 1986, Radko has created more than 5,000 intriguing designs, which are then executed under his exacting guidance by skilled glass blowers in Poland, Germany, Italy and the Czech Republic. His "Home for the Holidays" Collection features meticulously crafted porcelain figurines, snow globes, decorative accessories, candles, cookie jars and more.

The site's home page is like a "window to the holidays," according to Christopher Radko. It changes many times during the year to follow seasonal needs and special occasions other than Christmas. The collections include ornaments for Halloween, Easter, Valentine's Day, weddings (a bride-and-groom ornament and a "Just Married" car) and summertime (exotic fish). Visitors to "Christopher's Funhouse" on the site will be treated to a sparkling "Winter Wonderland" or "Haunted Mansion," featuring live-action, music-accompanied scenes of charming animated ornaments.



Christopher Radko



Christopher Radko

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Silver boxes
by Lunares

holiday hitlist

- Walnut Photo Frame $39.95
- Floral Ivory Hut Box $49.95
- Tall Metal Pillar Holder $59.95
- Foliage Verdigris Firescreen $229.95
- Athens Pedestal Vase $259.95

living.com

HOMING INSTINCTS

You know how it can take months—even years — to fill those empty rooms in your new home or apartment? First, there's the shopping, often a frustrating and bewildering experience. Find the styles you want at the price you want to pay. Then wait for the stock to come in. And finally, try to schedule a delivery time that actually coordinates with your life.

Well, those days are over. Now you can furnish your entire home in a matter of hours. All you need is a computer and a reasonably good sense of style. living.com is an Internet retailer offering home furnishings, accessories and almost everything else you need to realize your personal vision of your living space. This Austin, Texas-based firm has created a skillfully-designed on-line service that leads you through the process of finding things perfectly suited to your taste. The site's powerful search engine brings together thousands of pieces, then breaks them down into categories to help you find furniture and accessories that blend effortlessly.

Items are grouped by three attributes: type, style and material. For example, if you're looking for a new couch or love seat, you can view sofas by type —sleeper, motion, modular sectionals. Then by style—traditional, contemporary, mission. And then, finally, by material—upholstered, leather, and so on. There's also a "What's New" section to bring shoppers up-to-date on new trends in furnishings and home accessories. To help spark your imagination, it's also possible to browse the site room-by-room to see how selected items live together.

Inventory runs the gamut, including accent desks, accessories, armoires, baker's racks, beds, bookcases, chairs, chests, china, clocks, curios, dressers, entertainment centers, headboards, lighting, mattresses, mirrors, nightstands occasional tables, office desks and storage, rugs, sofas, tables, wall decor and wall units. living.com really has thought of everything; after you've found an item you like, you can have the image e-mailed to a friend or spouse for feedback before you buy.

The goal of the company, according to Chairman and Chief Web Officer Andrew Busey, is to "empower our customers and set new standards for customer service, quality and excellence." Busey says he encourages shoppers to consult with the company's experienced design team before making final decisions to avoid common mistakes and ensure complete satisfaction.

In addition to its e-commerce business, living.com produces an online magazine featuring design tips and 24-hour design consultants.

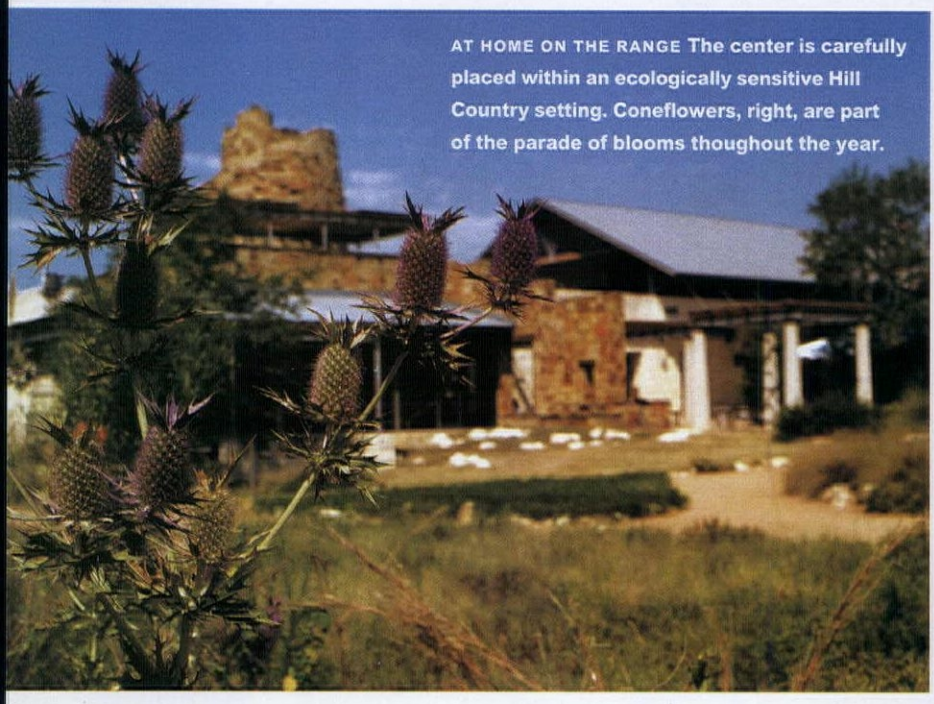
living.com™



Love seats and lamps by living.com,
family room design by Mimi Lampert, divorce attorney.



Home furnishings, accessories and almost everything else to express your personal vision for your home.
To find the items featured in this ad, visit our homepage at www.living.com or on AOL.



AT HOME ON THE RANGE The center is carefully placed within an ecologically sensitive Hill Country setting. Coneflowers, right, are part of the parade of blooms thoughout the year.



going native

At the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Texas, a high-minded concept, restoration ecology, is very down-to-earth

Do you want to know the secret of youth? Turn your life upside down? Returning to the bottom of a learning curve is one sure way to be born again. Any curve will do, but gardening's ellipse is steep enough to make your ears pop, as I recently discovered. After 30 years, gardening in England had become just too easy, with so many plants to choose from, a mild climate, and rich loamy soils. What I needed was a challenge, and I certainly got one.

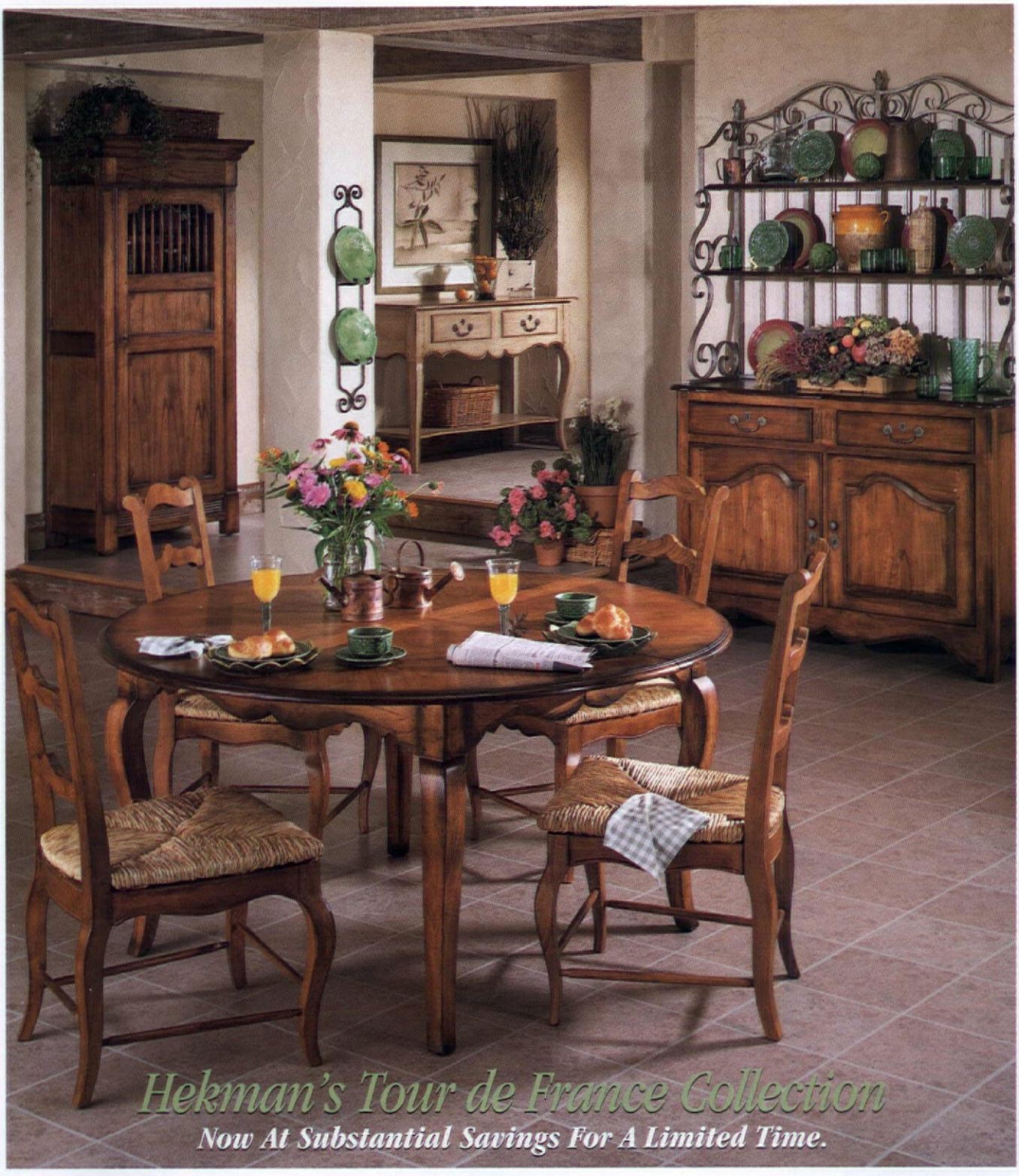
Go west, middle-aged boomer! Which my husband and I did, landing in Austin, Texas, just over a year ago. The thermometer throbbed at 104 degrees as I surveyed our urban manse: a brick rancher, hemmed by broiled Bermuda grass and a few frazzled euonymus. Dead branches dangled in the cedar elm, while memories of my lush, 1.5-acre rural English garden flickered like Xanadu before tear-filled eyes—Austin's notorious allergies were kicking in fast. As was the realization that even though I'm a native-born American (a Yankee, not a Texan) and fully support the use of native plants, I had absolutely no idea what the Hill Country flora might offer, never mind the heat and the armadillos.

The road to my personal renaissance began on a visit to Austin in 1996, when I discovered the National Wildflower Research Center, recently renamed the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Our new home is five minutes from the center's gate, so, sunblocked and hatted, I made my next visit. It was early spring, and the bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush were carpeting the ground; they were also the only plants I could name. I knew then that to measure up to Lone Star gardening, I had to acquire a whole new plant vocabulary, plus the finesse to deal with extreme conditions. Luckily, basic gardening skills are fairly universal, so I made my way to the Volunteer Office, where Peggy Budd, who musters the troops, offered me the chance to exchange my labor for wildflower knowledge.

"Some people work here because they admire Mrs. Johnson and hope to meet her, but most come to learn and then, through their own gardens, share their experience of native gardening with their local community," Budd says. "They're a cohesive mix of career professionals, retired folk, Junior Leaguers, experienced, and not so experienced, gardeners, many of whom belong to other local or national conservancy groups."

Of course we're not just let loose,

It's hard to argue with the fact that how we live with the land has a direct impact on how we are able to live on it



Hekman's Tour de France is inspired by French provincial furnishings, renowned for their casual elegance and comfort.

The Tour de France collection is crafted of select hardwoods and features hand carved details, cabriole legs and shaped tops. The finish has a warm distressed appearance. The collection offers a variety of dining, occasional pieces, chests, a desk, and versatile entertainment centers.

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and staff horticulturists, while fielding endless questions, direct our work. There are also useful references everywhere, including a pinup of poisonous snakes, scorpions, spiders, and other critters to watch for while potting seedlings, planting new areas, deadheading, weeding, and propagating native plants rescued from bulldozed development sites, of which there are plenty in Austin's booming economy. England was never this exciting!

THE CENTER'S GARDENS aim chiefly to demonstrate to homeowners the possibilities for ornamental gardening using the native plants of central Texas and the Hill Country's Edwards Plateau. They showcase the many advantages of such schemes as low water use and low-cost maintenance, and the native-fauna friendliness of a floral banquet that attracts clouds of butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds (and the occasional diamondback rattler).



SITE SPECIFIC The architecture draws from the Texan vernacular of Spanish missions and domestic German styles, while using local materials such as limestone.

There are many regional wildflower centers scattered across the States, but interest in the work at Austin's center is not restricted to Hill Country Texans; it has 21,000 members scattered across the United States, and visitors come from all over the world. They are drawn by its reputation for ecologically sensitive gardening.

Native garden making can be seen as an exercise in putting back what is missing, but the center's new enterprise

When your kids fight, our seats take sides.





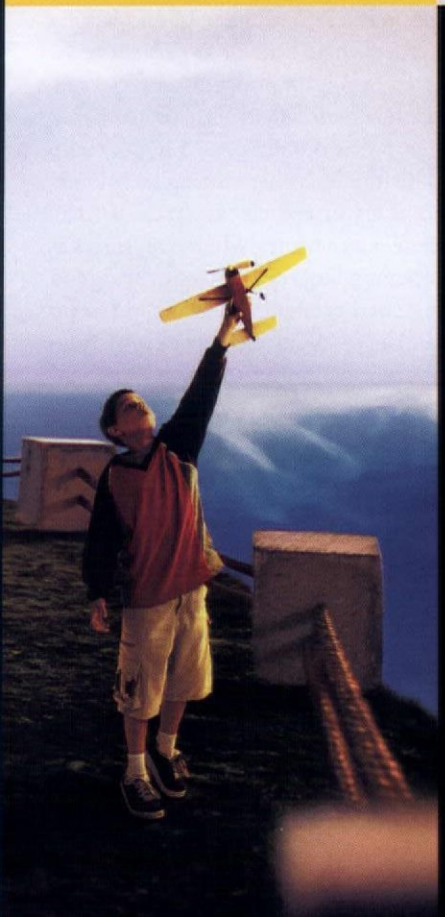


LEARNING BY EXAMPLE **The demonstration areas, top, show gardeners how to use native Texas plants at home. A water feature, above, cools the Texas heat.**

can be described as an exercise in taking away. They have just acquired 136 acres of oakland savanna to serve as the hub for the Center for Landscape Restoration, which promotes the removal of nonnative species and atypical landscape features as a means of reinstating lost habitats and compromised ecosystems. In a similar project south of San Francisco, the coastal dunes of Monterey Bay are being rehabilitated by dismantling the Fort Ord military buildings, recontouring the dunes, and replacing nonnative colonies of ice plant and pampas grass with a Beach Garden, using native dune plants raised by local schoolchildren and residents.

Encouraged by the Society for Ecological Restoration (a networking organization founded just over ten years ago), that project and the center's, along with others like them across the United States and in 24 foreign countries, are a valuable resource for owners of large tracts of land, and for developers of commercial and industrial sites. These projects show them how to conserve natural habitats by working "within the envelope," a shorthand phrase for the practice of building or landscaping with the least possible disruption of the native environment.

Restoration ecology also addresses the link between biodiversity and cultural diversity. It's hard to argue with the fact that how we live with the land has a direct impact on how we are able to live on it. This is as true for backyard gardeners like me as it is for urban landscapers and developers; we're just a few of the threads from which the world is woven, and I don't want to be remembered as the raveled spot in the fabric. So, following the center's lead, I'll begin by banishing the euonymus and Bermuda grass, and encourage the return of natives like American beauty-berry, big muhly, and bluebonnets. But I'll skip the rattlesnakes.



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the caviar caveat

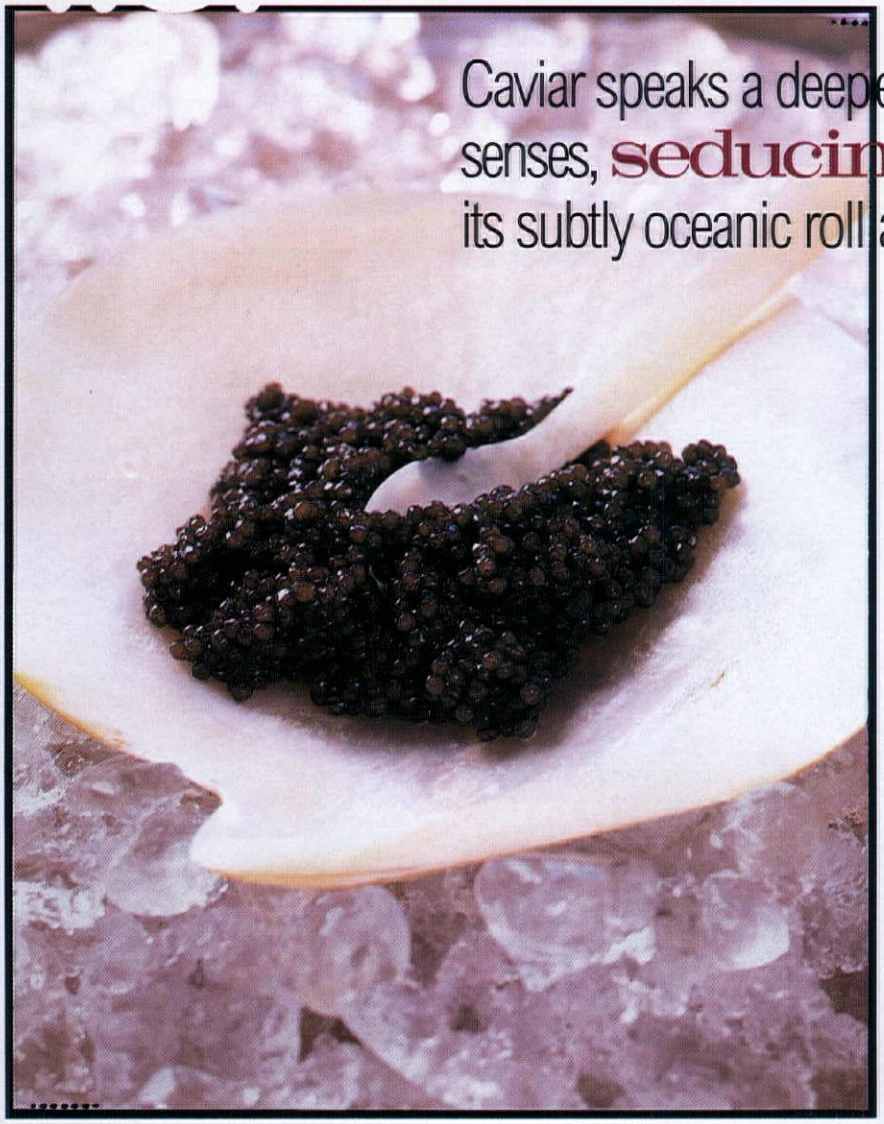
Let the buyer beware: even at their priciest, not all roe are created equal

THIS NEW YEAR'S EVE to end all New Year's Eves, the thoughts of voluptuaries and vulgarians alike will turn to caviar. Sturgeon eggs have had a long twentieth-century run as the ultimate party food—precious and costly stuff that speaks a convenient shorthand. "This is a singular occasion," caviar suggests. "We are prosperous and likely to be more so," it augurs hopefully. "We are just as capable as any Russian czar of putting on the ritz."

To its partisans, though, caviar is less the ultimate party food than the ultimate food, period. Its initiates see not a sinister, alien pile of fish eggs but a thousand pearly points of light. To them, caviar speaks a deeper language of the senses, seducing with its dark luster; its clean, subtly oceanic roll across the tongue; the subliminal pop of each small, perfect sphere. That it seems made expressly for champagne, the ultimate party liquid, makes it all the more festive.

Yet nothing is less festive than bad caviar, as a colleague of mine discovered last December 31. She arrived at a party bearing a tin of sturgeon eggs procured—at great expense—from Browne Trading Company, the respected seafood dealers out of Portland, Maine. And it was awful. Musty. Murky. Decidedly off. Down crashed every last one of those cultural associations with which caviar is so richly endowed. "Nobody had more than one bite of it," she reported glumly. "It was so embarrassing."

So, how to guard against caviar catastrophe? As an experiment, we taste-tested five ossetra caviars (the eggs from the second-largest Caspian sturgeon, between the big beluga and the smaller sevruga sturgeon in weight) that we purchased from major American suppliers. Even among these well-established names—Petrossian Paris, Caviarteria, Urbani Truffles & Caviar, Browne, and Caviar Russe—the differences in quality proved eye-opening. Out in the broader marketplace of gourmet food stores, high-end supermarkets, and the wild-and-woolly Internet, where scads of suspect sites now tout cheap roe, the prospects are dicier still.



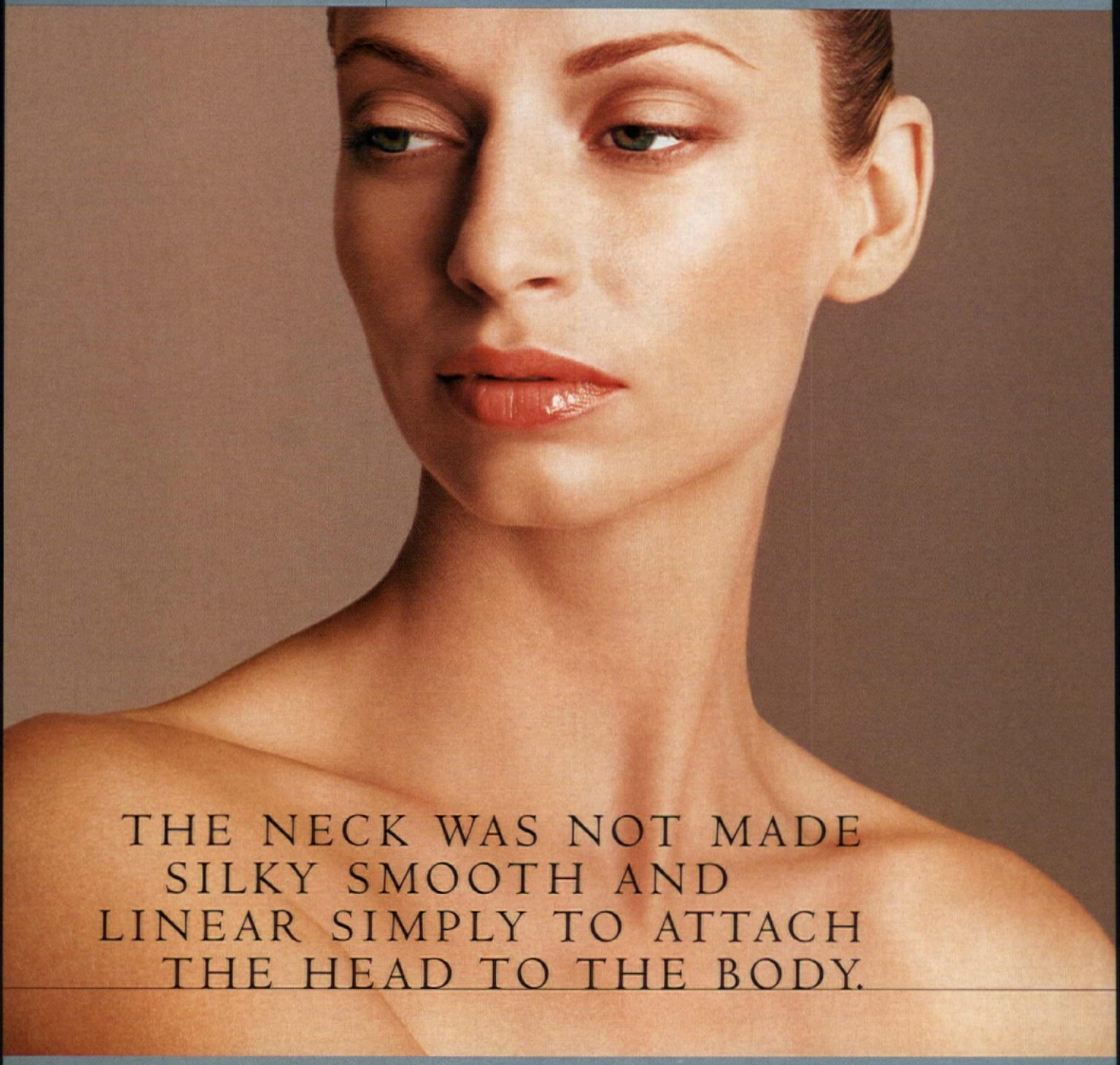
Caviar speaks a deeper language of the senses, seducing with its dark luster, its subtly oceanic roll across the tongue

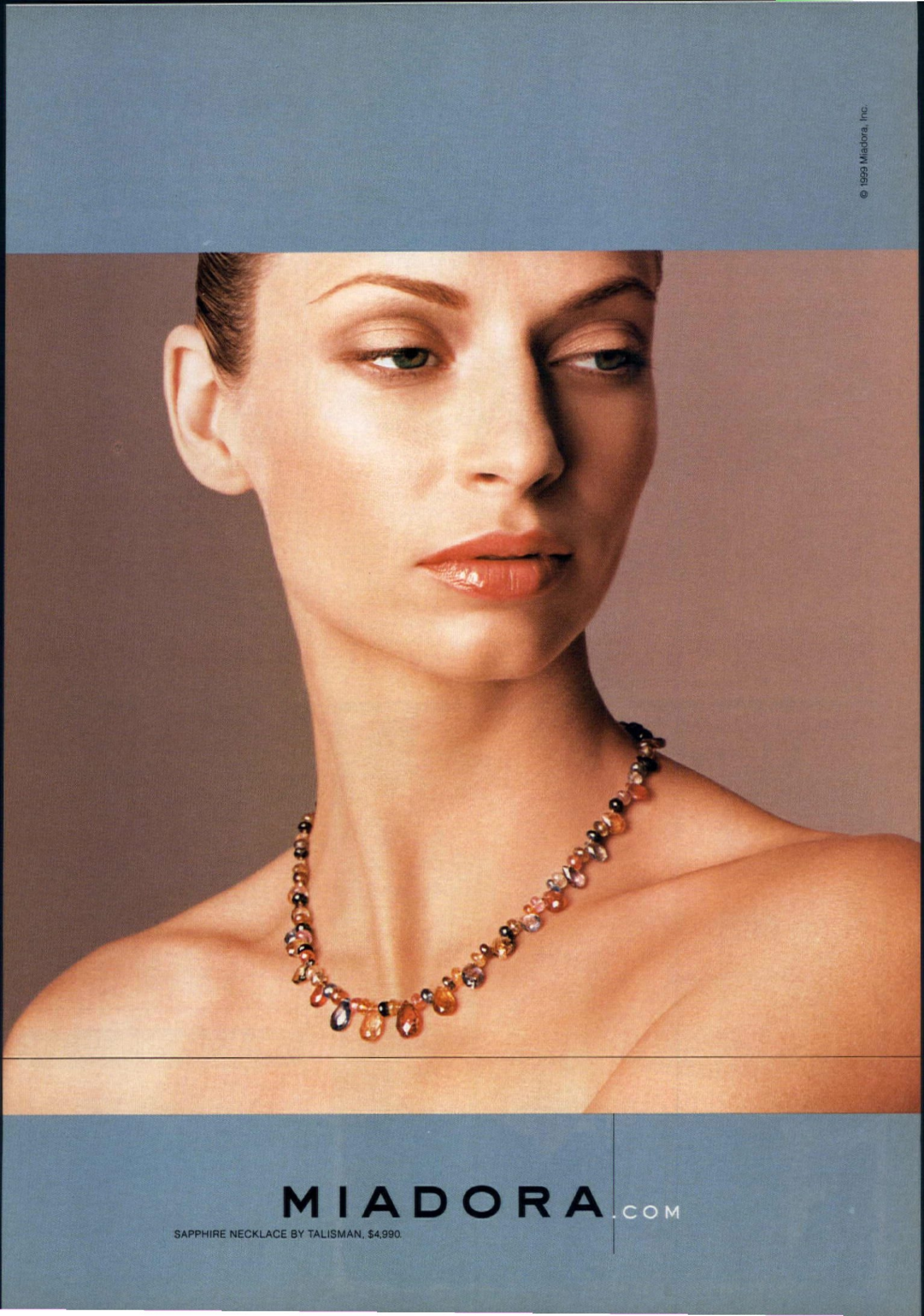
Unfortunately (and perhaps inevitably, when profit potential is so high), there is a history of corner-cutting and cloudy pedigrees in the caviar trade. In the nineteenth century, when America was producing large quantities of sturgeon roe, entrepreneurs here would send their caviar to Europe, repackage it, and import it as more expensive "Russian" caviar. Their spiritual cousin is the modern-day Manhattan retailer who was observed by a friend of ours switching less costly ossetra into beluga tins.

Until two years ago, when new regulations reined in the piratical smugglerfest that the post-Soviet, Caspian caviar trade had become, there was a brisk international commerce in "suitcase" caviar of

DARK PEARLS **The best roe, like these from Caviar Russe, New York City, need no embellishment.**


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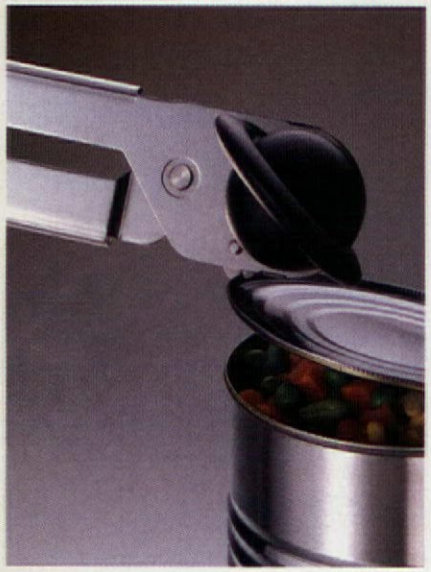
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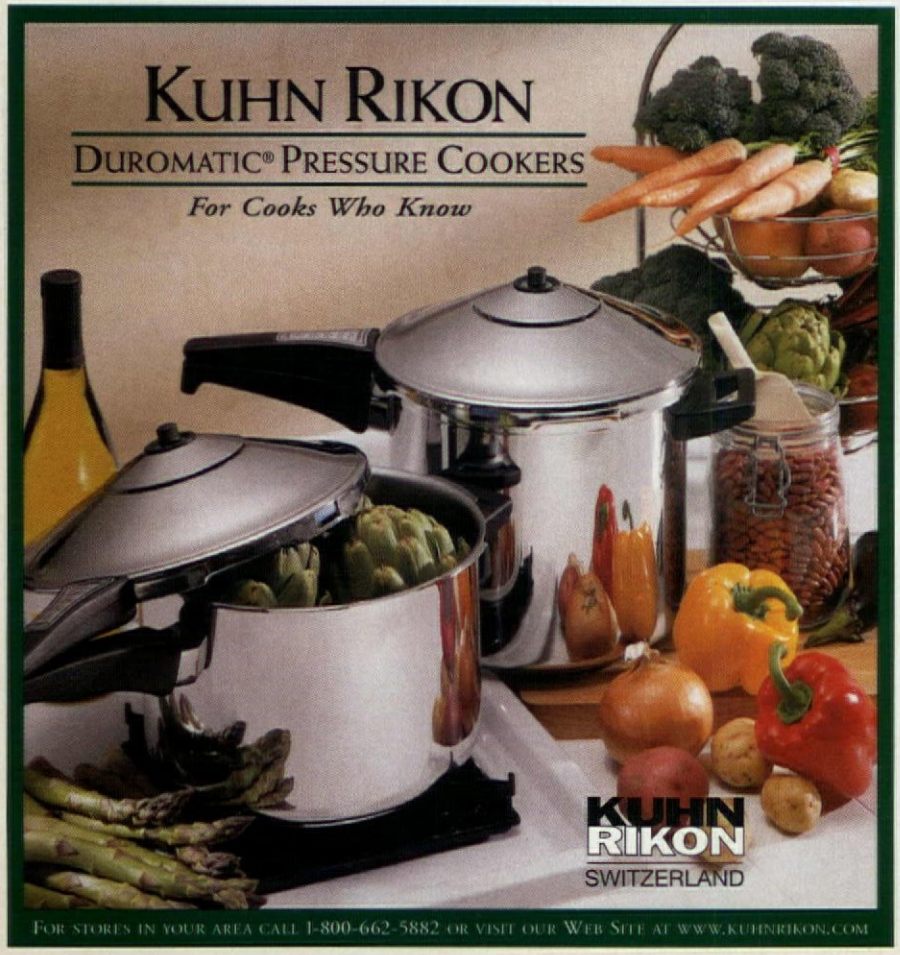




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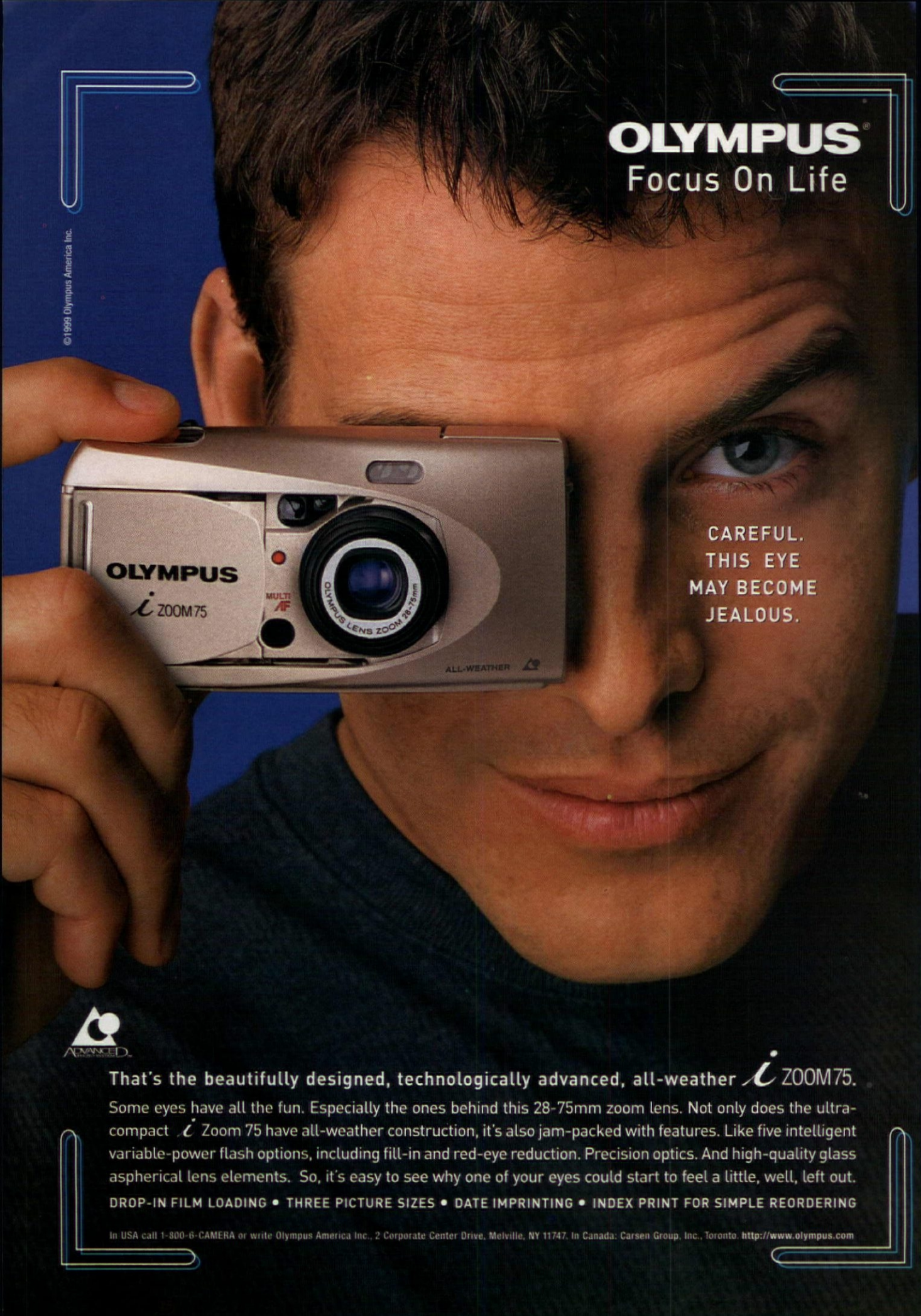
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doubtful provenance. While things have settled down considerably, *caveat emptor* remains a prudent rule when you're investing as much as $150 in 50 grams (1.8 ounces) of triple-zero beluga, the largest-grained of all caviars. Price alone is no guarantee of quality. (In our test, the most expensive caviar finished dead last.) But at the same time, if you see a caviar ad with a price that seems too good to be true, it probably is. The host who succumbs to the garbled Web page offering Azerbaijani caviar mail-ordered from a Czech supplier is liable to end up with fish eggs on his face.

It's best to buy from a reputable, large-volume supplier like Caviar Russe, whose New York retail emporium furnished the hands-down winner in our tasting. Dealers who move large quantities of roe and make a science of cold-storing it are more apt to sell you glorious eggs, like our sample of Caviar Russe ossetra malossol (a word that simply means lightly salted, which is the only thing that happens to caviar between the time it is sieved and the time it is packed into tins). Suave and wonderfully textured, with a quietly explosive roll across the palate and just enough taste of the sea, each egg was distinct—and so pristine that, together, the eggs left no mark on a white plate. At $30 per ounce—roughly half the price of beluga—and with a fuller, more rounded flavor, this ossetra lived up to its reputation as the best caviar value. The Caviar Russe won the beauty contest, too, with its pearled sheen of gunmetal gray. Best of all, we knew in advance exactly what we were getting, since Caviar Russe's Madison Avenue store allows you to actually taste the caviar you are thinking of buying.

With mail order, you can't eyeball your purchase, so you may end up with a strangely matte-finish mass of dark brown eggs, like our sample from Urbani (about $25 for 1 ounce). It had excellent flavor that sang of the sea, and it was the least expensive brand tested. But it was unlovely. Not so the light-flecked ossetras from Caviarteria (emphatically salty and distinct; $41 for 1 ounce) and Petrossian (softer and stickier, with a deeper, tawnier hue; $49 for 1 ounce). Stickiest of all—almost slimy, in fact—was the ossetra from Browne, the source of my colleague's earlier mortification. Once again it flunked out: overly salted and mushy, it had a funk to it that even the old caterer's sleight-of-hand— the caviar milk rinse—couldn't cure. At $35 per ounce, it seemed a particularly bad investment. The mystery is that Browne has acquired an exalted status as chef Daniel Boulud's caviar supplier; presumably his very pricey private-stock label, available through Browne, is more reliable.

Buying wisely is not the only caviar trick. Caviar should be stored for no more than a week and *(Cont. on page 167)*

TASTINGS

Whether you buy caviar in a shop or by mail, place your order well enough ahead of New Year's Eve to avoid any last-second shortages. Expect the price to spike during the holidays. And count on, at the very least, 1 ounce per serving—although 2 ounces is more like it. Here, in order of our preference, is a summary of the caviars we rated.

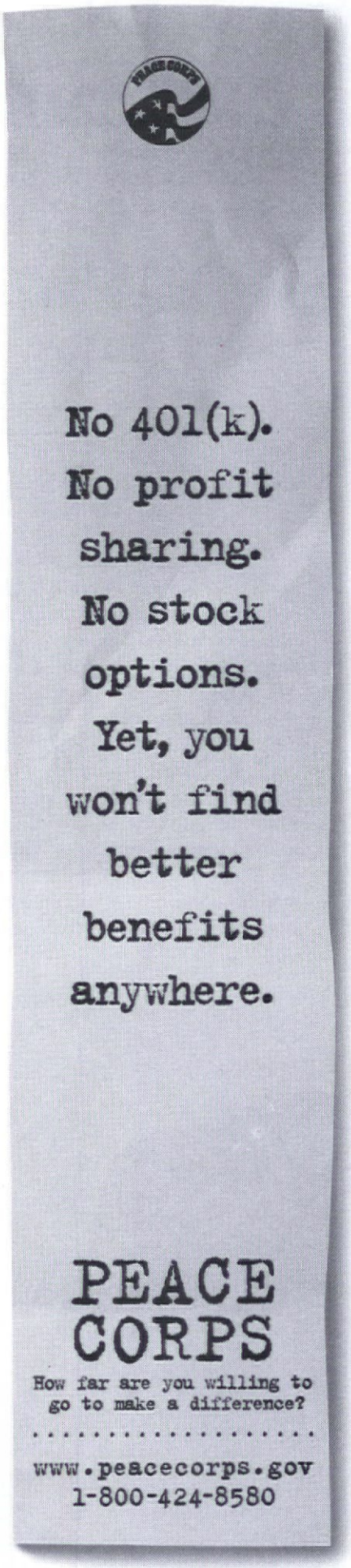
1. CAVIAR RUSSE OSSETRA MALOSSOL Our unanimous favorite. A gorgeous pearly gray, with a rounded, sea-tinged flavor not too heavy on the salt. Clean, distinct eggs with a classic, pleasantly resilient ossetra texture. $125 for 4.4 ounces. Shop and tasting bar at 538 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022. 800-NY-CAVIAR.

2. URBANI TRUFFLES & CAVIAR OSSETRA IMPERIAL A stirring oceanic flavor that was subverted by its muddy, matte-finish appearance. But a bargain at $64 for 4 ounces. 800-281-2330.

3. CAVIARTERIA OSSETRA Excellent appearance. Luminous gray color, eggs nicely distinct, with a bit of a spring. Clean flavor that seemed a shade too salty. $150 for 3.5 ounces. Great little spoons and Vermont crème fraîche available, too. Shops and tasting bars in New York City, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Miami. 800-4-CAVIAR.

4. PETROSSIAN PARIS OSSETRA Rich, tawny, light-reflective appearance, but the soft, slightly sticky eggs were less than optimally distinct. $215 for 4.4 ounces. 182 West 58th Street, New York, NY 10019. 800-828-9241.

5. BROWNE TRADING COMPANY CASPIAN ROYAL OSSETRA Musty, mildewy flavor and a sticky, almost slimy appearance. About $140 for 4.5 ounces. 800-944-7848.



cult cabernets

Classy new cabernet sauvignons from the rocky slopes of Napa are causing a sensation

"There's gold in them there hills."

—ANON.

"There's hills in them there gold."

—ALFRED HITCHCOCK, on seeing Grace Kelly in a gold lamé dress

IN MORE THAN three years of performing this monthly duty, I have somehow managed to avoid more than a passing reference to Napa Valley cabernet sauvignon. Partly this was sheer contrariety on my part, Napa cabs being to the wine world what IBM once was to the stock market—too obvious and ubiquitous to excite the interest of the maverick. (Like, big yawn, dude.) By now, though, I'm way overdue. In just about the same span of time that Microsoft and Intel have become the new blue chips, the quality of Napa cabs has risen as fast as the Dow. A new generation has arrived to challenge the old guard: the Mondavi Reserves and the Heitz Martha Vineyards. And like the new post-Microsoft Internet stocks, boutique cabernets (and cab blends) are springing up every year, creating a frenzy of interest in the wine press and the auction houses. Unlike that fly-by-night.com you bought on-line yesterday, the quality of many of these wines is indisputable. It's undoubtedly premature to attempt a list of California first growths, as the Bordelaise did in 1855 when they created their controversial five-tier classification. But what the hell. Impetuous is my middle name.

The 1990s have witnessed a huge improvement in California wine making, as well as an increased understanding of the importance of soil, microclimate, and viticulture. The multimillion-dollar phylloxera epidemic that swept Napa and Sonoma, thanks in part to rootstock advice from the boneheads—oops, sorry, make that eggheads—at U.C. Davis, has been a blessing in disguise, forcing older wineries to reevaluate where and how they plant. And newcomers have the benefit of past trials and errors. One common denominator of most of the great new Napa cult cabs is their location on hillsides, rather than on the valley floor.

"Even in ancient Rome," the *Oxford Companion to Wine* informs us, "it was said *Bacchus amat colles,* or Bacchus loves the hills." Without going into a lot of boring stuff, let's just say that high-quality viticulture is counterintuitive: whatever is good for corn is bad for wine. The supreme values of California culture—laid-back demeanor and constant sunshine—don't always make the best wine. Whatever doesn't kill your vines makes them stronger. You've got to stress the suckers. Hills are good for this. The soil is thin, the rocks are thick, the drainage is good and the temperatures cool. And steep grades necessitate hand-picking, a boon for quality. Needless to say, these hillside wines are, almost by definition, limited in production.

Bill Harlan, a real estate investor with a serious wine jones, was one of those

Whatever doesn't kill your vines makes them stronger. You've got to stress the suckers



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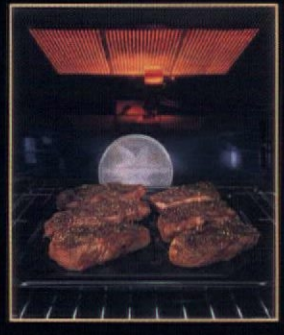
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOGIN MAYO

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Californians who noticed that the great wines of Europe usually come from hillsides. Over the course of the '80s he put together a precipitous hillside parcel on the west slope of the Napa Valley. Oblivious to the great views, his vines cling precariously to the slopes, thirsty and stressed to the max, like shantytown dwellers above Rio. With the help of Pomerol's flying wine wizard Michel Rolland, Harlan and wine maker Bob Levy have more than realized Harlan's goal of creating a great bordeauxlike red, blending cabernet with small amounts of merlot, cab *franc,* and Petit Verdot. Anyone lucky enough to be on the mailing list, take note: I'll trade a 1995 Château Mouton Rothschild for a bottle of the '95 Harlan Estate. 'Nuff said.

Bryant Family Vineyard and Colgin Cellars are two other superstars of the past decade that come from Napa hillsides. Both were coaxed to fame by Helen Turley (that's right, *the* Helen Turley), who believes that serious slope and rocky soil are prerequisites for "grand cru" Napa sites. If we look at market price as an indicator of quality—as the Bordelaise did when they established their classification—these two wines, which can sell for upward of $1,000 a bottle at auction, are at the top of the Napa Valley hierarchy. And while both could be mistaken for monster hot-vintage first-growth bordeaux, Turley's wine-making alchemy is such that they are far more delicious in their youth than the Frog juice. (On a personal note, the great '94 Colgin and '94 Bryant will be on the table at the McInerney millennial dinner. If I were a better father, I would sell my modest holdings of both and secure my children's future.) The Turley-made Jayson Pahlmeyer Proprietary Red is also a serious contender for first-growth status.

Whether we measure by auction prices or Parker ratings, Dalla Valle is producing two of the greatest Napa reds. Their cabernet sauvignon and their cab-*franc* blend named after their daughter, Maya, are spectacular wines from yet another great hillside location. Heidi Barrett, who consulted for Dalla Valle, is responsible for Screaming Eagle, one of the most recent of the hillside cult cabs, as well as Grace Family Vineyards, which was perhaps the first and remains the cultiest of them all. Add to this list the mighty Araujo Estate Wines cabernet sauvignon from the famous Eisele Vineyard, as well as Shafer Vineyards and Philip Togni Vineyard, and you've got the start of a Napa Valley first-growth classification. In addition to vineyard terrain, which is inhospitable to corn and polo, these wines all have tiny production and huge prices in common. In my next column, I intend to examine some of the top large-production cabs (many coming from—gasp!—the valley floor). Is Opus One really first-growth quality? Does Mondavi Reserve merit unreserved kudos? Is Sterling Vineyards still golden? Can the big producers compete with the "cults," the flatlanders with the highlanders? Stay tuned. Same magazine, same column, new millennium.

THE OENO FILE

'96 ARAUJO ESTATE EISELE VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON One of the most distinctive cabs of all, this is a super-rich, velvety wine that is tightly wound right now but opens up with time into a banquet of subtle, overlapping fruit flavors with spicy highlights. $100

'96 BRYANT FAMILY VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON Wow! This starts with Junior mints on the nose. The first sip is mind-boggling. The semisweet, super-ripe black fruit seems to keep building even after you've put the glass down. Despite its massive structure, Helen Turley has once again finessed the tannins, so that it's hard not to drink this wine right now. $120

'96 CARDINALE ESTATE RED WINE This super-premium, handcrafted product from Jess Jackson of Kendall Jackson (a.k.a. the Evil Empire) is a whopper. Very concentrated, with somewhat forbidding tannins, this blackberry and cassis elixir should mellow into a beautiful monster. $100

'95 HARLAN ESTATE NAPA VALLEY RED WINE At a recent tasting, I couldn't spit this one out. The suppleness and complexity of a great Pomerol, along with the big abs and pecs of a Latour. Brilliant! $145

In addition, the following California cabernets, in any recent vintage, are well worth searching for: Colgin Herb Lamb Vineyard, Dalla Valle, Peter Michael "Les Pavots," Pride Mountain Vineyards Reserve, Shafer Hillside Select, and Philip Togni Vineyard.



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christmas in july

Who decided to extend the season of cheer and major cash outlay to the other 11 months?

AROUND THIS TIME of year, some bright-eyed, lit-up soul, flush with the glow of having dropped a dollar or two in the Salvation Army bucket, gets the bright idea of declaring, "Why can't it be Christmas every day? Why is it that we can't act this way to our fellow man all year round?"

This is meant as a rhetorical question, the rest of the speaker's year being apparently nothing but a bleak and featureless snowscape of back-stabbing, hard feelings, and misanthropy.

Slowly but surely, people like this are getting their wish. Christmas spending isn't what it used to be: while it once accounted for roughly 25 percent of the selling year's receipts, it now accounts for only 23 percent. And so the Christmas spirit—if you can call it that—is spreading, annexing weeks and months of the year like an Axis army. Christmas has already rolled right over Thanksgiving's harvest hues and has paved its way clear back to late October, where the red and green clash with Halloween's black and orange. And in the past few years the Christmas sale season has moved forward as well, showing no sign of slowing down come January 1, 15, or even 31.

If you don't believe that Christmas is nearing 24-7-365, pay a visit to any resort town anywhere in the United States. Odds are, you will find one of the stores where it is Christmas every day of the year (except for Christmas, of course, when they're closed). There's enough fake snow and ornaments in these places to cover your lawn several times over, should you be so inclined. (And if you ask me, too few people are so inclined, now that precious glass ornaments, which must be hung by the chimney with care, have replaced the treasured lit-up plastic scenarios that once defined American Christmas.)

Here in Noel Eternel (as one such store is called), not Saint Nicholas but Saint Christopher Radko reigns supreme. As if you didn't know, Radko is the Dark Prince of Christmas collectibles, his handblown, hand-painted, fantastic glass ornaments costing anywhere from $10 to $250. Then there's Department 56, which sounds ominously like something out of *The X-Files*. Department 56 manufactures elaborate little replica villages—Dickensian, Santa Claus–ian, et cetera.

If all this seems slightly like some cute but inconsequential fringe phenomenon, bear in mind that there are more than 300 of these year-round stores, most of them in vacation spots where people either have time and money to burn shopping for extraneous bric-a-brac or are so relaxed that their credit-card guard is down. Between all the handblown whatnots, angel figurines, model villages, and sundry red-and-green china, sales of Christmas collectibles totaled $1.1 billion in 1996, according to research by Unity Marketing, a firm that specializes in the collectibles market. That $1.1 billion represents an increase of 21 percent over 1995, and is also less than a third of the total sales of Christmas-themed items, $4.5 billion in 1997.

"Christmas is now the number-one collecting theme," says Pam Danziger, Unity's president. "It's got everything: a strong emotional tie, a spiritual tie, nostalgia. It captures the essence of what collecting is all about."

And just what is collecting all about? Beneath the superficial rationales, says Danziger, "many collectors do it as a sort

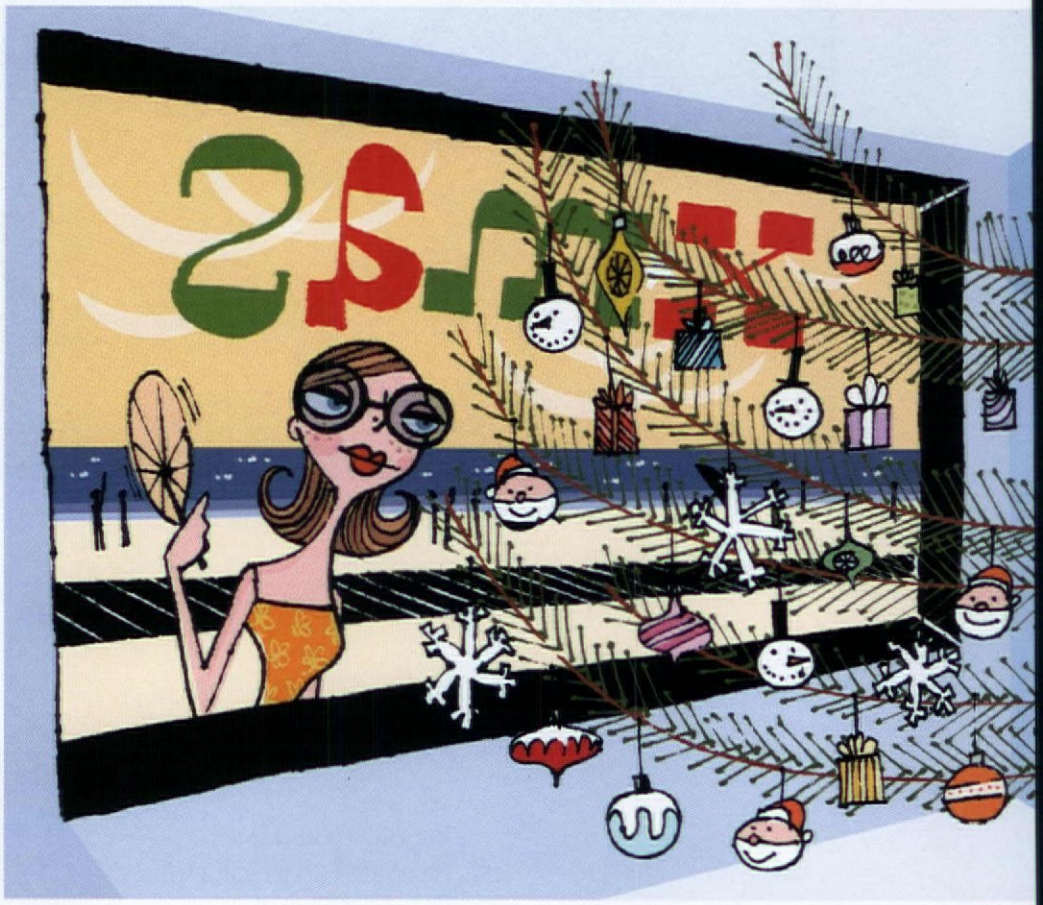


ILLUSTRATION BY BILL BROWN

of external way of representing their personal identity. They can point to this collection and say, this is part of who I am." Heaven knows what Freud would make of such a statement, but Danziger attributes it to the desire to gratify one's inner child—never mind the fact that Christmas is supposed to be a holiday for outer children.

And here's the mordant irony of today's seasonless Christmas. The Christmas collectibles market, most of which is designed to recall a day when Christmas was not so wildly commercial, has become one of the country's most blatant commercial enterprises.

IT ALL BRINGS to mind the hilarious short story "Christmas Every Day," written by William Dean Howells in the 1880s. A little girl insists that her papa tell her a nice Christmas story. ("It's getting to be the season," she says with a pout. "It's past Thanksgiving already.") In turn, he tells her about a little girl who gets her wish that it be Christmas every day for a year. It's not pretty. Picture *Groundhog Day* set on December 25. What with the populace doing nothing but constantly buying presents, the story goes, "they got so poor that everybody had to go to the poorhouse, except the confectioners and the fancy-store keepers and the picture-book sellers and the expressmen, and they all got so rich and proud that they would hardly wait upon a person when he came to buy. It was perfectly shameful!"

Which actually sounds an awful lot like Christmas on Madison Avenue, 1999.

"By that time," her papa continues, "people didn't carry presents around nicely anymore. They flung them over the fence, or through the window, or anything." And instead of attaching a nice note, the story goes, "they used to write in the gift books, 'Take it, you horrid old thing!' "

Which actually sounds an awful lot like Christmas with my family, 1998.

Anyway, the little girl in question comes to the sensible conclusion there on her papa's knee that Christmas is better off once a year instead of once a day, proving yet again that when faced with facts, children can be eminently reasonable.

If only the same could be said of inner children.

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home cooking

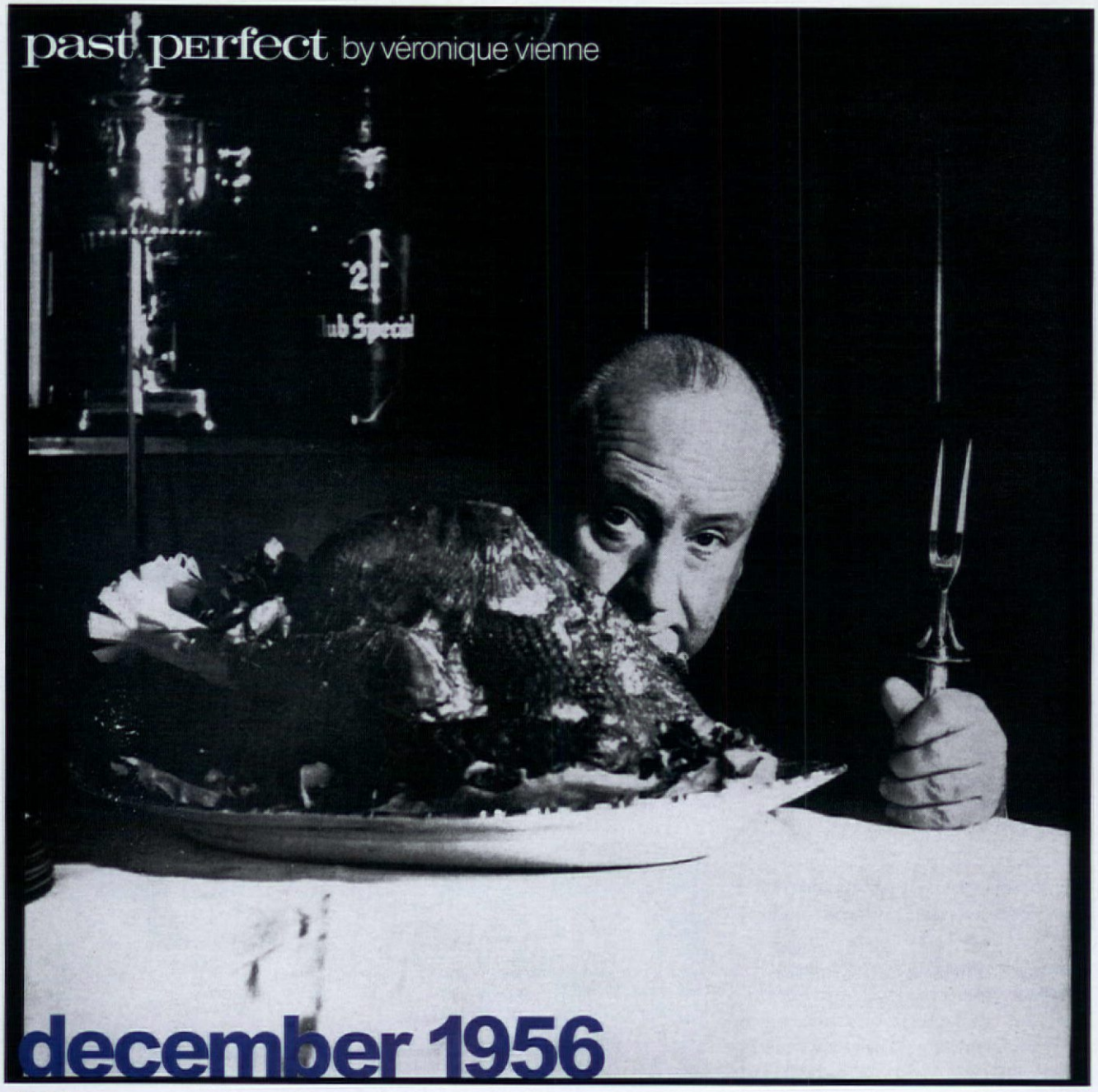
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december 1956

LEAVE IT TO the master of suspense to turn carving a turkey into a classic thriller. In 1956, for its December issue, *House & Garden* asked Alfred Hitchcock to show readers how to cut apart a Christmas fowl. Although the wicked Englishman would not demonize winged creatures for another six years, with the film *The Birds,* he had no trouble unnerving his audience simply by peeking over the profile of a plump roaster.

But the magazine's editors could not resist a prank of their own. To tease the chubby director, they unleashed the wit of Ogden Nash. In his poem "What Every Christmas Turkey Should Know: How to Harass a Hitchcock," the American humorist turns the hunted into the hunter and instructs a roasted turkey in the art of tormenting a knife-wielding "hitchcock." "Spatter your juices upon its cravat," the poet urges the turkey. "Leap from the platter and land on the napery."

The poem was also an invitation to "use your bird brain as well as your bright little eye." Observant readers could dig up clues in every sentence. "Pick a hitchcock of opulence rather than corpulence / Just pleasingly plump, with a snug silhouette," admonishes Nash, referring to the opening sequence of the *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* television series, in which Hitchcock's shadow is superimposed upon a drawing of his rotund outline. "The hitchcock supreme has a wide streak of ham in it," he continues, this time alluding to Hitchcock's frequent cameos in his own films. "But don't gobble too proud going back to the kitchen," Nash warns at the last. "You licked the hitchcock, but look out for the hitchhen." Indeed, Alma, the director's wife, a petite and birdlike lady, by all accounts, was a formidable film editor in her own right. She was "my severest critic," Hitchcock conceded.

"The hitchcock supreme has a wide streak of **ham** in it" —Ogden Nash

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BOWLINGS AT 1956

Photography by Don Pitlik



NOT AVAILABLE AT A STORE NEAR YOU

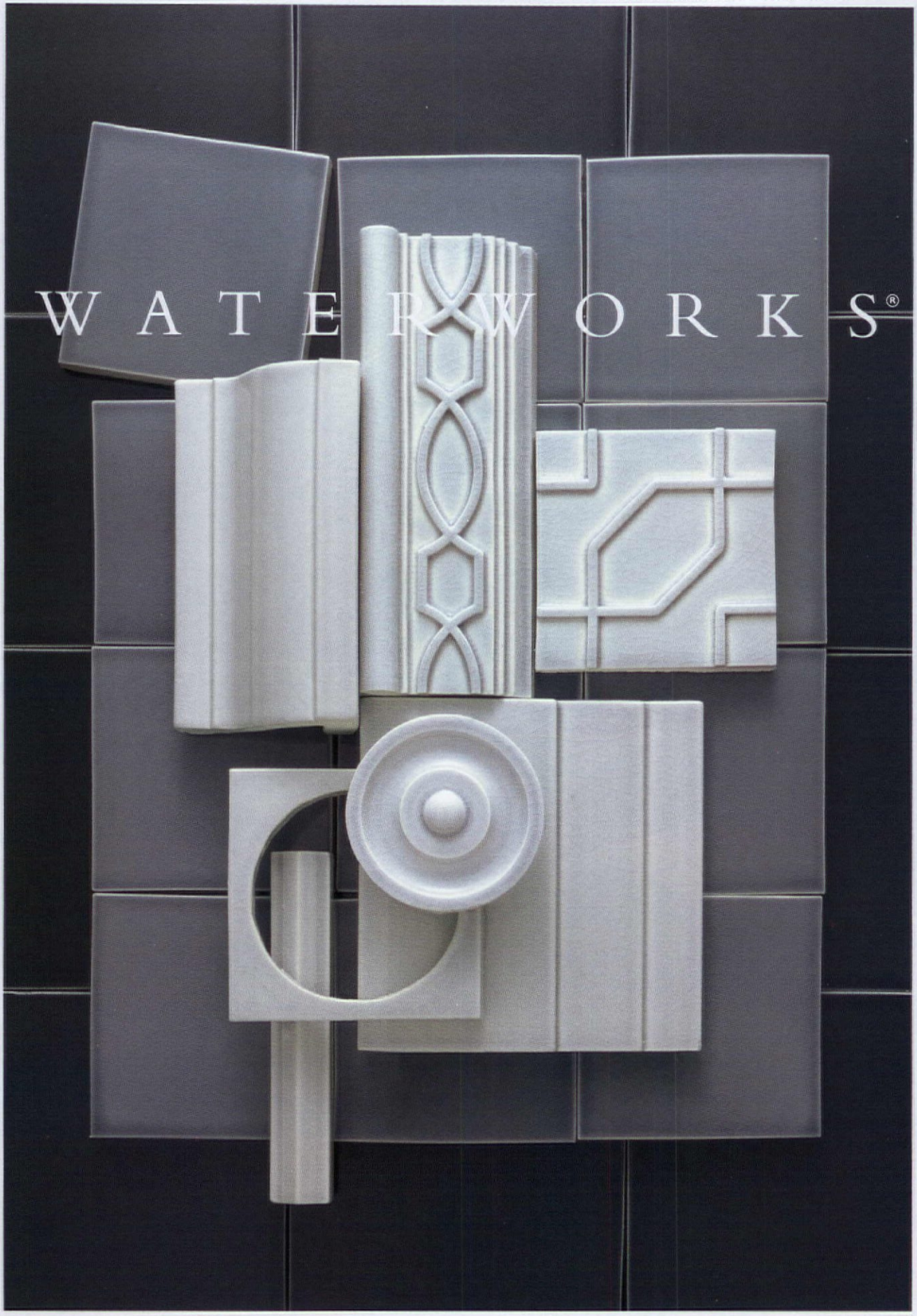
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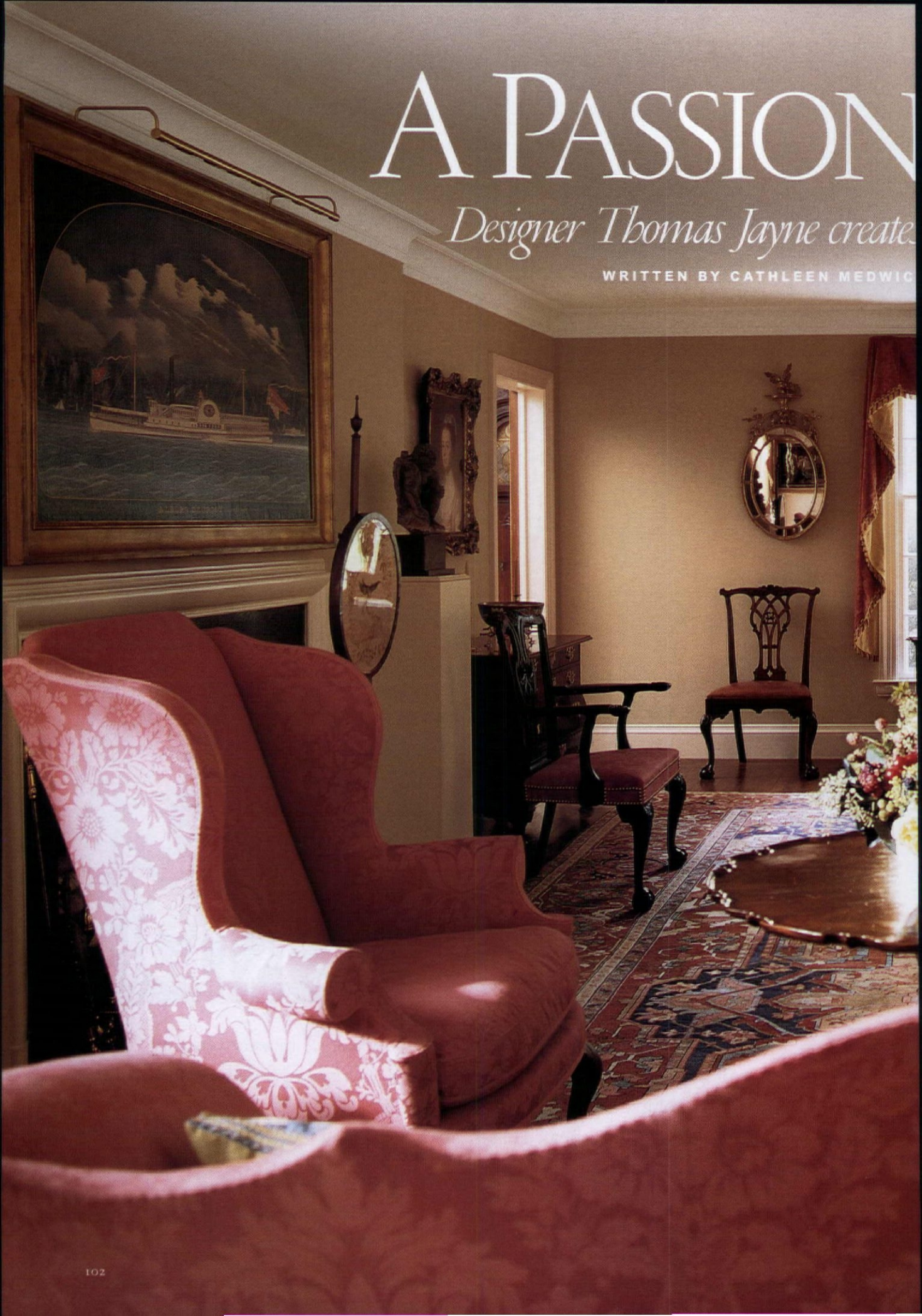
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House & Garden

NATIVE PRIDE

first principle Declaration of independence: A museum-quality collection of Early American antiques can be at home in a mid-twentieth-century interior. The revolutionary idea is to suggest period rooms without re-creating them. That means taking liberties—but exercising restraint. The judicious attention to individual pieces, the creation of a unified whole, are what democracy in design is really about.

Light through an interior window illumines a bit of history: China trade urns and a China trade Hong bowl once owned by the Boston Cabots.



A PASSION

Designer Thomas Jayne create

WRITTEN BY CATHLEEN MEDWIC

FOR OUR PAST

a comfortable space for a museum-quality collection

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PIETER ESTERSOHN PRODUCED BY CYNTHIA FRANK



TWIN PHILADELPHIA CHAIRS by Thomas Tuft, symmetrically placed beneath a pair of gilt wood mirrors, lend a sense of classical harmony to a room integrating a modern sofa covered in Palazzo by Donghia with lamps made from antique Chinese jars, a Pembroke table, and a 19th-century French clock with a figure of Washington. Above the fireplace is *The Reindeer,* an important American painting by James Bard.

The trick was to create rooms that suggested, not reproduce



eriod interiors







A 6TH-CENTURY BUDDHA in the sitting room, these pages, keeps watch over the drawing room's rare 18th-century Philadelphia pieces. Custom woven and colored wool damask upholstery plays up the forms of the double-peaked sofa, wing chair, and side chair grouped around a mahogany Logan table. Cushions on the sofa are made from 18th-century dress silk brocade. A CHIPPENDALE chair and Bombay chest of drawers, ca. 1775, top right, keep company with a 1768 pastel by John Copley. THE INTRICATELY CARVED armchair, detail, right, is a prime example of the Rococo style in American furniture.

"We used decoration





AS IF THE BOTTLES of Chateau d'Yquem and the 18th-century imported English silver salvers, top left, weren't appetizing enough, the dining room boasts a triple-pedestal American dining table (one of three extant), these pages, once owned by the Livingston family; an inlaid William Lloyd sideboard; and *Thomas B. Way,* painted by Bard. The Bardith plates may be fragile, but the modern silk squabs, with mattress tufting, on the late-18th-century English chairs are sturdy enough to withstand the stresses of daily family use.

IT ALL BEGAN with a sofa. A passionate collector of Early American furniture had acquired a very rare and beautiful double-peak sofa at auction and wanted to know how to reupholster it. An ardent young decorator with a comprehensive knowledge of classic American furnishings had seen this sofa earlier and had become intrigued by the idea of finding the perfect fabric to cover it. It was inevitable that these two men would meet and that, as so often happens when an artist finds his ideal patron, a productive working relationship would begin.

The collector and his wife (he is a partner in a financial management firm, she is a museum docent) live in a 1930s center-hall Colonial in Westchester County, New York. For years they had been buying ancient Indian and Himalayan art, and furniture in the late Federal style. They had become attracted to the graceful silhouettes of earlier American furniture; and though they had a world-class collection, they didn't know how to showcase it. Enter decorator Thomas Jayne, a veteran of Winterthur, the Cooper Hewitt, and Christie's (not to mention Parish-Hadley), who had just returned from London with some knockout period-style fabrics and trims. He knew just how the Philadelphia double-peak sofa should be reupholstered: not in silk damask but in the more historically

ridge a collection and a family house" —THOMAS JAYNE



In Richard Cameron's addition, a new stairwell



accurate wool damask. He envisioned handmade silk tufts to embellish the horsehair mattress. He envisioned a subtle shade of pink instead of the more traditional red.

The collector was impressed. He in turn began to envision an entire house where his fabulous pieces could be displayed to advantage. He enlisted Jayne to redecorate and to help him plan an addition. "We used decoration to bridge his great collection and his family house," says Jayne. "He had all these wonderful things but was living in this, by most definitions, modest house." The trick was to create rooms that suggested, but did not slavishly reproduce, period interiors; this was a house to be lived in as well as admired. Thus, in the refurbished drawing room, the Philadelphia sofa, with its chaste, straight legs, rests on a Persian carpet—an anomaly in an eighteenth-century room—near an easy chair that would normally reside in a Colonial bedroom. A modern sofa is flanked by a generic Pembroke table. Classical harmony is achieved through symmetry (matched Thomas Tuft chairs flanking a window), color

winds down gracefully to the lower floor



DELICATE GLOW suffuses the new
air hall, this page, designed by Richard
ameron. The Indian sculpture in the niche
left is a ceremonial lingam, representing
e male creative force, from the Mathura
riod. AT THE FOOT of the stairs, opposite
ge, beneath an early-19th-century gilt
od mirror, an 18th-century French clock
lled Tempo d'Amor serves as a material
tness to the marriage of love and time.

In Jayne's fluid "essay in decoration," everything fits



GAUZE FROM Rogers & Goffigon, with Scalamandré silk trim, creates a country ambience in an upstairs bedroom, this page. The reproduction bed is draped with a quilt from Laura Fisher, and Christopher Norman's Robbie striped wallpaper serves as a foil for one of many China-trade paintings. THE ROOM'S LUXURIOUS COUNTERPART is the downstairs bedroom, opposite page, top; its early-19th-century canopy from Florian Papp is swathed, like the club chairs, in Hydrangea from Colefax and Fowler.

(neutral walls, pink upholstery and draperies), and proportion (a Salem chest-on-chest instead of a Philadelphia case piece, which would be out of scale). Everywhere are singular objects, including canvases by Copley and Bard and an intricately carved Chippendale chair. Jayne recalls how the collector, walking through the Metropolitan Museum's American wing with curator Morrison Heckscher, said, "It makes me so happy to be here!" Heckscher quipped, "You just like coming here because your furniture is better."

THE QUALITY OF the collection posed an unusual problem. "Usually you're dealing with antiques as accessories," says Jayne, "but here the objects are so good, you don't want to distract from them." He assembled a "committee of taste" (including an upholsterer and a museum curator) to make decisions about fabric and trim. Jayne researched historic, block-printed wallcoverings for the front passage. Cole & Sons, in London, carved new pearwood blocks to recreate a nineteenth-century pattern with an Indian design—one of many allusions to the couple's extraordinary collection of Asian antiquities. In a typical period room, you wouldn't find a fifth-century Indian lingam sculpture, used in fertility rites—unless, by chance, an eccentric ship's captain had lugged it home. But here, in the newly constructed stair hall, it fits, part of the fluid "essay in decoration" that is a Thomas Jayne interior.

The addition, by architect Richard Cameron, draws light through skylights inspired by those at London's Soane museum, through glass screens, and through an oval interior window based loosely on one at a historic New York house. The new breakfast room, with its slightly elaborate swag curtains, is a logical extension of the dining room, while the new sitting room, with ample windows, serves as a brilliant backdrop for the drawing room's double-peak sofa.

The new staircase winds gracefully to the lower floor, with its card room and the collector's mother's bedroom. A far cry from the upstairs bedroom, with its folksy gauze curtains and painted floor, it has an English campaign bed from Florian Papp and oceans of chintz—a nod to her penchant for mid-twentieth-century luxury. As the collector and the decorator know quite well, that's American, too.





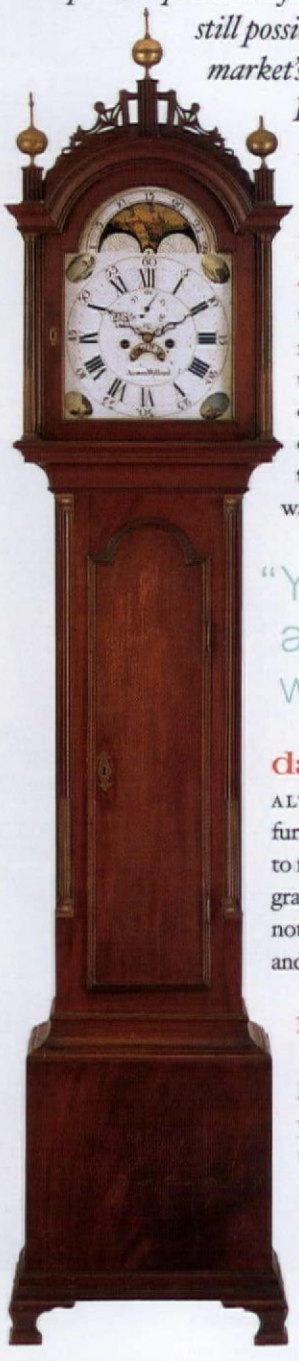
WARM PINE paneling, yellow silk damask, chintz curtains from an 1820s pattern, an 18th-century mahogany secretary bookcase—not to mention orange leather upholstery on a Philadelphia armchair—make the library, above, an inviting retreat. An American tea table, ca. 1750, is poised in front of a modern sofa. Sources, see back of book.

trade secrets

tips from the top

The market for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American furniture is booming, fueled by scholarship, renewed interest in American decorative history, and pride in cabinetmaking that could rival that of England or France. Important pieces are fetching more than $1 million at auction, but it's still possible to acquire good pieces. "It's exciting that the market's not exhausted," says New York dealer Albert Sack. Here, some experts offer advice.

—SABINE ROTHMAN AND JOYCE BAUTISTA





leigh keno *Leigh Keno American Antiques*

< AN ADMIRER of everything from tall case clocks, left, to highboys, right, Keno says, "Look for wear that doesn't make logical sense. A piece is made up of different parts. All the parts should look like they've had a conversation with each other for years. If you're **looking at a highboy**, pull the drawers out and make sure the construction in the **top section matches that in the bottom**. You'll see dealers do that and immediately walk away. If the parts don't match, they don't even bother."

"You can attribute a piece to a **region** based on style and on **secondary woods**. For example, Philadelphia will have poplar and yellow pine" —LEIGH KENO

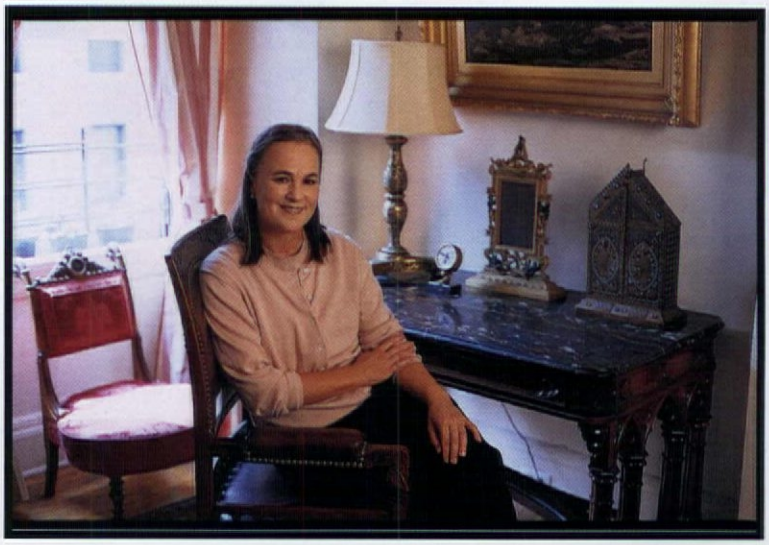
david easton *Interior designer, David Anthony Easton, Inc.*



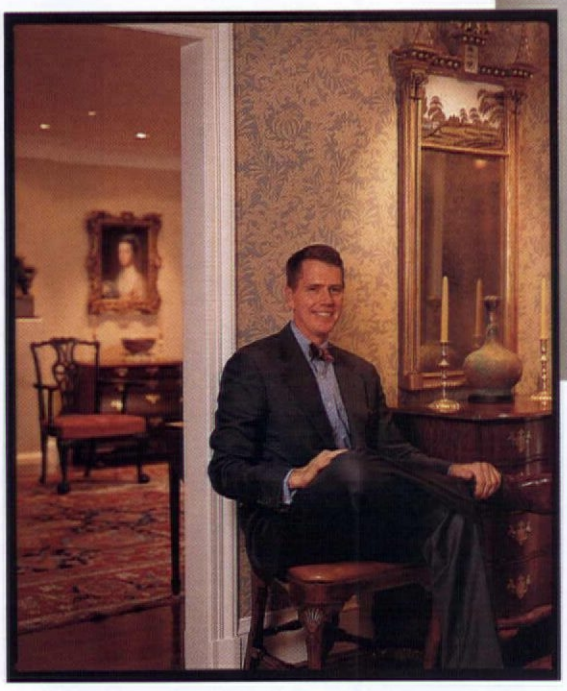
ALTHOUGH HE LOVES the lines and proportions of Federal and early American Empire furniture, Easton says **painted country furniture is alluring and accessible**: "If you want to find charming, wonderful things, just go up and down the East Coast. It might not be grand, but it's just as special." He also suggests buying early American silver pieces from such notables as Philadelphia artisans Thomas Fletcher and Sidney Gardiner. Use your instinct, and **be patient**. "It takes time," Easton says. "Learn what you like."

margaret caldwell *Private dealer*

> "I'M SITTING IN A CHAIR by Louis Comfort Tiffany whose mate is in the Tiffany Museum in Japan; the design is from 1878, yet the handrest is almost Art Deco—it's 50 years before its time," says Caldwell, whose interest in furniture is genetic—Edward F. Caldwell & Co., her great-grandfather's firm, made the *objets* on the desk. "Aesthetics, material, and construction get me first. Then I **try to find the manufacturer, designer, and provenance**. The quality sings to you, and urges you on to **do the homework**. The great advantage of nineteenth-century furniture is that there are photos extant. Many pieces were at the World's Fair, and there are pictures from the great houses. **You have to dig**, but that's half the fun."

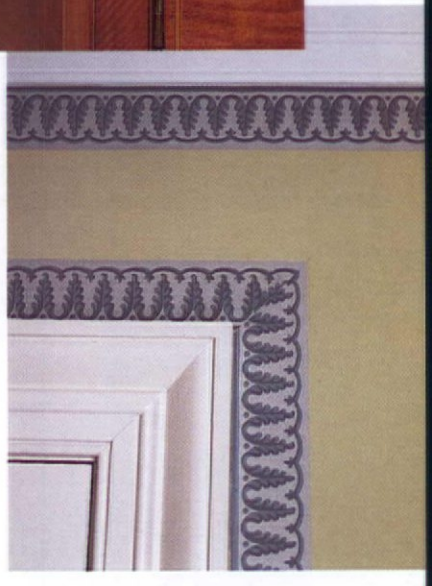






thomas jayne *Interior designer, Thomas Jayne Studio, Inc.*

> "IN THE EIGHTEENTH century, great papers in halls were a wonderful way of introducing a pattern that would serve as a spring for the rest of the decoration," Jayne says. For the passageway, he saw this late-nineteenth-century English pattern, with its Indian design, as the **perfect segue** into rooms melding Asian antiquities with American classics. In the main rooms Jayne kept wall treatments simple. Plain watercolor paper in the dining room, bottom right, is hand-painted, a technique used in early American houses. The **printed border enriches the room** without distracting from important pieces, such as an inlaid sideboard, top right.



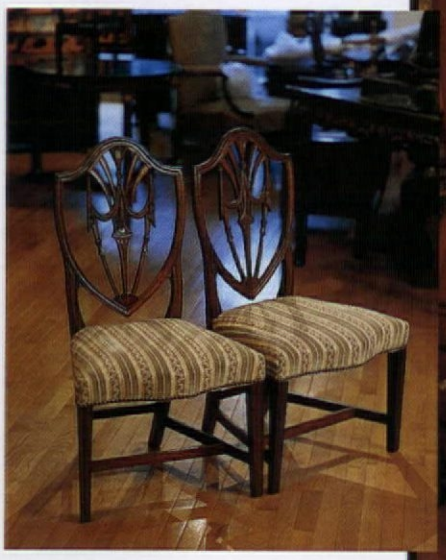
"Buy **excellence**, whatever you can pay. If you can't afford a highboy, buy a flattop highboy, or a chest of drawers, but buy a **good one**" —ALBERT SACK, DEALER





stuart p. feld *President, Hirschl & Adler Galleries, Inc.*

> SOME COLLECTORS of American furniture exult in dirt. Feld is not one of them. "People love eighteenth-century furniture with grungy surfaces," he says, "but **they conceal much of the beauty** of American furniture of the neoclassical period—the colorful woods, inlays, and so on. I believe that to leave it in this neglected state is to violate the cabinetmaker's intent. There is also the problem of **what has been added** that was not a part of the original design. Ormolu mounts were originally applied with concealed pins, not nails. The presence of nails may signal mounts that were added later. Mounts that have been on for a long time also leave a distinctive shadow that is extremely desirable to see," as on the card table, right. "Certain pieces have had gilding and verd-antique surfaces added, ostensibly to enhance their appearance, but no serious collector wants such later embellishments. I believe that the neoclassical decorative arts look best without dirt and other accretions of time." There's nothing glamorous about someone shellacking something over.





"Understand what you're looking for. What's the **quality**? Where is it going? Does it **suit the place**?"

—DAVID EASTON, INTERIOR DESIGNER

george subkoff

Owner, George Subkoff Antiques; president, Art & Antiques Dealers League of America

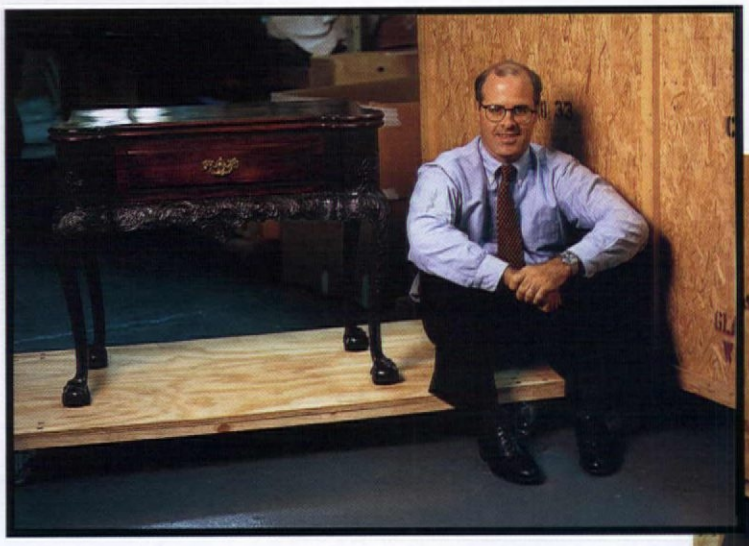
< "MY FANTASY IS to have a 300-room house with a different period in each room—I have learned to love a lot of different things," says Subkoff, whose guiding principle is education. "You must know what you're looking at and what you're looking for." He knows, for example, how to tell if a chair's seat rails are original, as on the Hepplewhite, left; and that if the feet have been pieced or the legs have been shortened, the value of a piece is greatly reduced. Novice collectors might **find an expert buyer or dealer to be a mentor**. "It's not so different from looking for a good doctor," Subkoff explains. Don't worry about starting out. "You can **buy things that aren't perfect** but still have the same look and the appeal of age."

nancy braithwaite

Interior designer, Nancy Braithwaite Interiors, Inc.

V DUNCAN PHYFE FURNITURE makes the Atlanta-based designer swoon. "It's big, bold, and gutsy," she says. As in the sofa below, which Phyfe designed on a large scale without sacrificing **graceful lines**. Braithwaite works with classic pieces she covets because of their commanding size and their dressy formality. To her, the key to buying antiques is to **educate yourself**. "Go to the best shops," she says. "Go to museums. See what's real and train your eye. Read Albert Sack's book *Good, Better, Best.* Even if your budget will not allow for anything but a reproduction, that's okay. At least you'll be able to spot a good one as opposed to a crummy one."





john hays

Senior vice president, director, American Furniture & Decorative Arts, Christie's

> "I LIKE American Chippendale furniture because of its **vigor and boldness**—it has solidity," Hays says. "Or maybe my taste just reflects the market. All the pieces that have brought $1 million or more were made around 1770." He expects the Philadelphia card table, above, could fetch a premium price because of its rich **original surface**, elaborate carving, and the squashed ball foot, typical of Philadelphia. "Card tables and tea tables were the epicenter of social life in Colonial America," he says. The walnut Queen Anne armchair, right, which "tends toward Baroque," is another of Hays's favorites. "You can see the clarity of the carver's intent. It's breathtaking."





bennett weinstock

Interior designer, Bennett & Judie Weinstock Interiors

< THE PHILADELPHIA-BASED designer doesn't hesitate to combine contemporary art with **whimsical nineteenth-century American furniture**, like an 1880s faux bamboo desk, left, from Margot Johnson, Inc., in New York City. He is passionate about all kinds of American naïve pieces, particularly those with painted finishes—but he has words of caution for would-be buyers. Fine naïve furniture may be even pricier than more formal pieces, and **must have the original paint finish intact**. "I want to invest my clients with the idea of collecting anything," Weinstock says. "Choose pieces that represent you personally. Passion definitely adds to the personality of the house."

"Things get so **badly hurt** over the years, and many weren't ever that great. You begin to **appreciate** pieces that do survive" —DEAN LEVY, DEALER



frank & dean levy

Dealers, Bernard & S. Dean Levy, Inc.

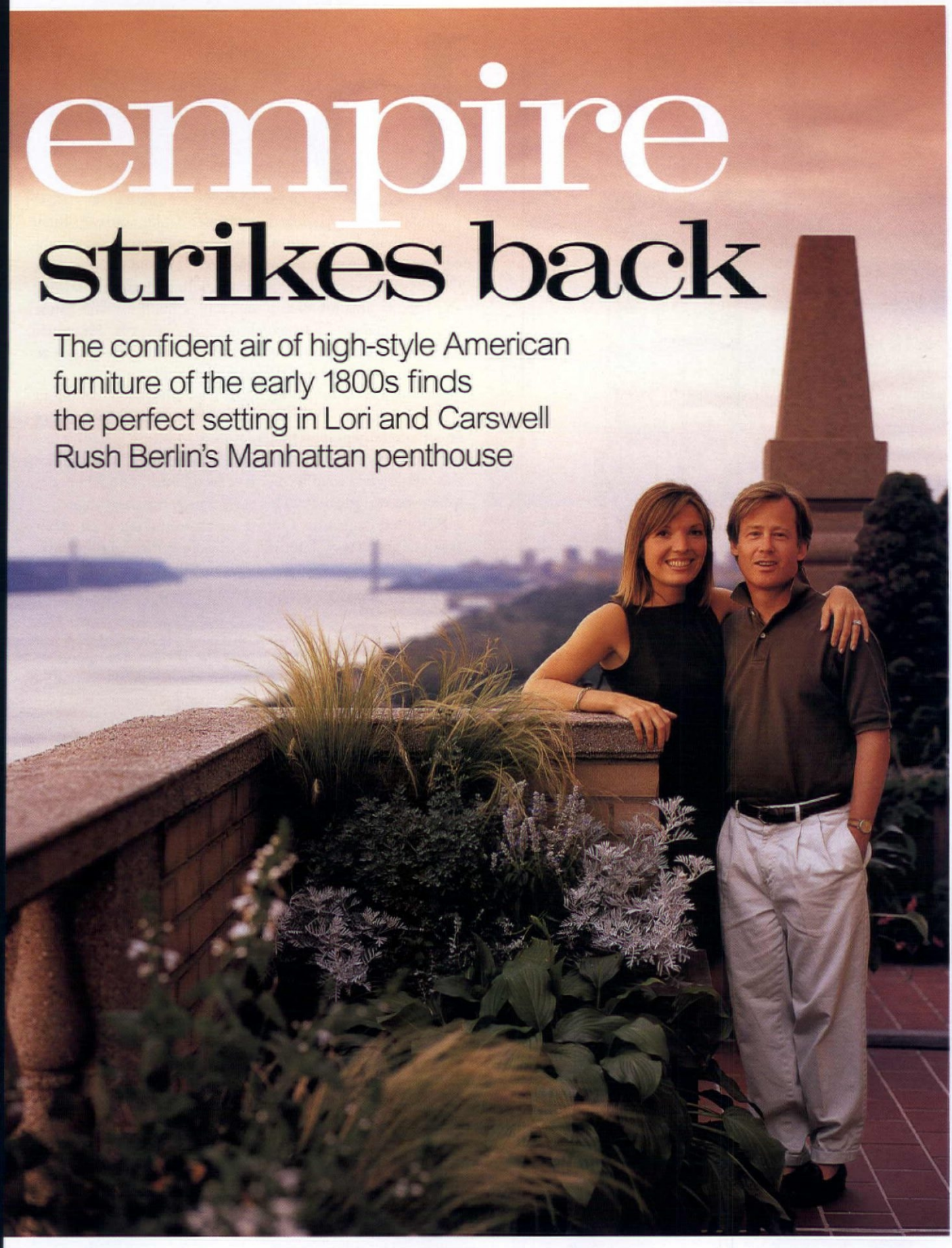
> "THE STUFF I live with is Queen Anne and Chippendale," says Frank Levy, who is the fourth generation to work in the firm where his great-grandfather started in 1901. "I think you should **have whatever fits an interior best**. In my old apartment I had late New York furniture. The place called for more petite, darker, formal pieces. The new place is a Colonial house. I thought it called for earlier pieces." His father, Dean, agrees that **living with your antiques is essential**: "We try to do as little as possible to any piece, but do what we must to make it safe, stable, and usable. Museums don't use furniture. People do."



BERLIN AND HIS WIFE, Lori, opposite page, have made their penthouse the ideal showcase for classical American furniture. IN THE ENTRY HALL, this page, the carved mahogany pier table with gilt decoration and an Egyptian marble top is attributed to Anthony Quervelle ca. 1825–35.

empire strikes back

The confident air of high-style American furniture of the early 1800s finds the perfect setting in Lori and Carswell Rush Berlin's Manhattan penthouse



BY WENDY MOONAN PHOTOGRAPHED BY PIETER ESTERSOHN

STYLED BY BARBARA KURGAN



"By their legs ye shall know them" is the adage that Manhattan antiques dealer Carswell Rush Berlin grew up on. The son of a passionate collector of eighteenth-century American furniture, Berlin was raised in New York City, where he spent many Saturdays with his father examining the legs of antique chairs and tables made by the finest furniture makers of Philadelphia and Newport. He never intended to become a dealer. After graduating from college in 1975, he ran a graphics design firm in SoHo.

On the side, he had already begun buying high-style American classical furniture made between 1800 and 1840—a century later than the period his father favored. "It wasn't as if I was trying to do something different from Dad," he says. "I didn't have the capital to do what he did. It costs millions. The other consideration was aesthetic. This period really turns me on."

So-called American Empire furniture (along with other styles of the classical period, including Federal, Directoire, and Restauration) is usually mahogany and occasionally maple or rosewood. It boasts deeply carved dolphins, eagles, palmettes, and female figures, and has the robust, confident air of an era when the republic was young and entranced by all aspects of classical culture.



Cabinetmakers like Hugh and John Finlay of Baltimore made overscaled horsehair sofas with life-sized carved wooden swan armrests and chimera feet. Anthony Gabriel Quervelle of Philadelphia elongated the dolphin form, balanced it on its nose, gilded it, and made it into a leg for a pier table. Charles Honoré Lannuier made elegant card tables with bases in the form of female herms with outstretched golden wings.

As his collection of furniture grew, Berlin realized he didn't have the proper setting to display it; high-style American furniture was designed for narrow Philadelphia and Boston town houses with high windows, tall ceilings, and symmetrical rooms. Berlin's Manhattan penthouse in a 1930s Art Deco building had

low ceilings, asymmetrical rooms, and casement windows.

"This apartment is a perfect example of breaking all the rules of decoration and making it work," he says. "First we made the doors go all the way to the ceiling, to add height. Then we tried to make the rooms symmetrical." He bought a period design book and asked decorator Richard McGeehan to adapt a formal Empire curtain design for his windows. "They cost a fortune," Berlin says of the curtains, "but they are as sumptuous as ball gowns." He asked his supplier of decorative items, Joseph Biuno, to create properly scaled gilded curtain



The proportions of the rooms and the height of the windows had to be altered to conceal the apartment's Art Deco past. THE BRONZE-MOUNTED mahogany secretary bookcase in the living room, opposite page top, was made in New York ca. 1820. THE CARVED MAHOGANY dolphin-based card tables in the hallway, opposite page below, were made in Philadelphia ca. 1825, possibly by Quervelle. IN THE LIVING room, above, the mahogany and flame walnut Restauration settees are from Boston ca. 1835. THE RARE *secrétaire-à-abattant,* right, was made in New York ca. 1825.



rods and tiebacks. "When I couldn't find the perfect ones, we made do," he says. "These would fool almost anybody."

When it came to paint colors, Berlin had another dilemma. "I couldn't afford real Venetian stucco, so I went to the Met with the Benjamin Moore color wheel and picked out paint colors in the frescoes from Pompeii and Herculaneum. The wall colors have nothing to do with period colors; I'm attracted to Tuscan yellow and Pompeiian red. There are decorating rules, and rules you can break," he says with a smile.

Paint is one thing, but the quality of antiques is not negotiable. "What is important is the furniture, and in my apartment it's an ever-changing collection," Berlin says. His pride and joy at the moment is an 1830 tilt-top table by Quervelle. "He was the most influential cabinetmaker of his period," he says. "This high-style Philadelphia table relates closely to one he made for the White House." Berlin also has a pair of pier tables attributed to Quervelle, as well as several stylish unsigned pieces made by New York, Baltimore, and Boston cabinetmakers.

In 1992, Berlin decided to become a dealer of classical American furniture. He has been accepted into New York's International Fine Art and Antiques Fair as well as the Winter Antiques Show, a coup for such a relative newcomer.

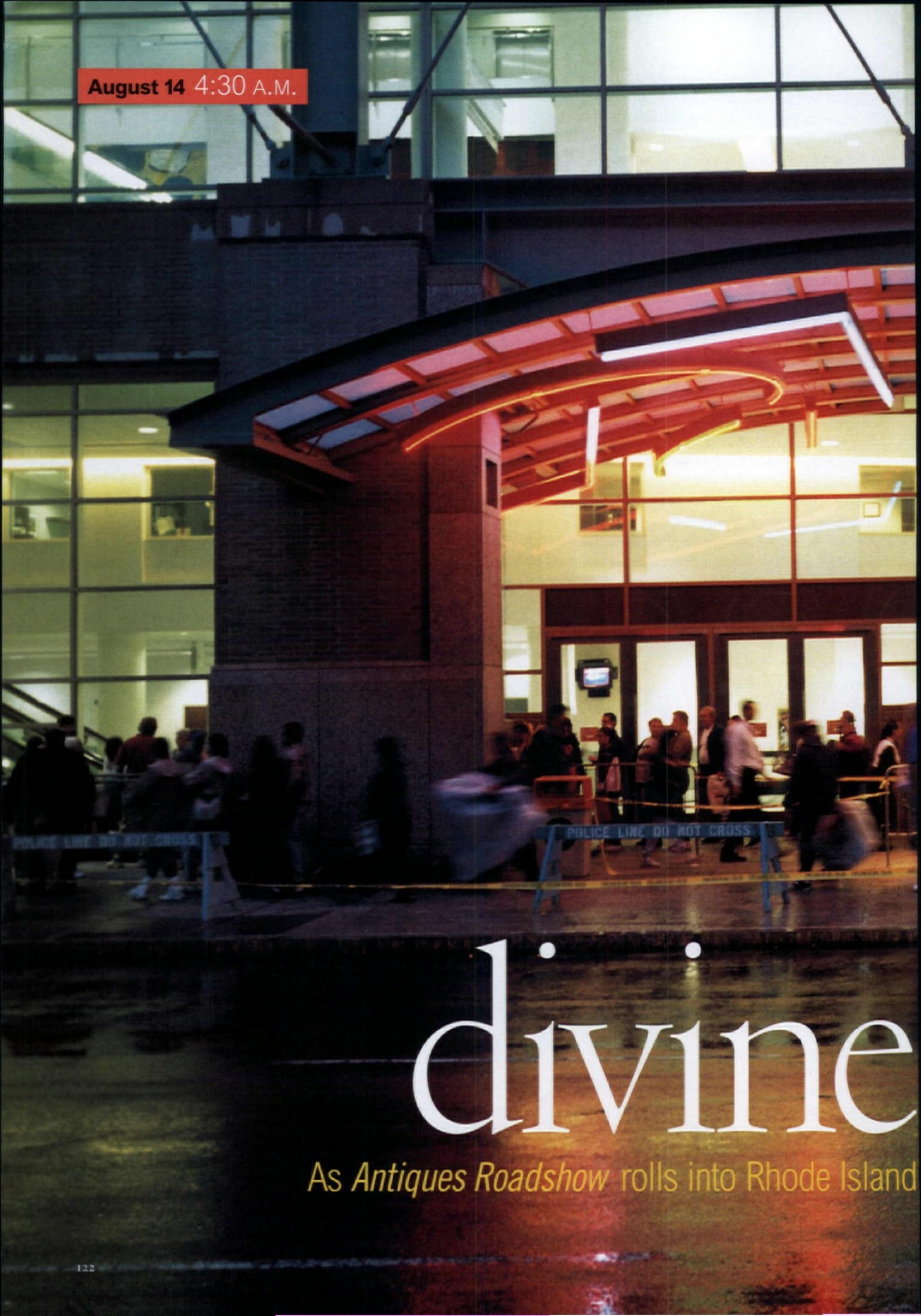
The problem is, of course, finding great pieces, especially those by Quervelle, Lannuier, Duncan Phyfe, J. & J. W. Meeks, Michael Allison, Isaac Vose, and Emmons and Archibald. "When we are not doing antiques shows, we are out looking for inventory," Berlin says, speaking of his collaboration with his wife, Lori, who works with him. "I'm looking for the highest-style pieces. We go from Maine to Baltimore. I've found important things in Louisiana and California."

What's the most important tool for finding great pieces? "My eyes," he says. "This pair of eyes has been to a lot of museums and read a lot of books. A flashlight, tape measure, and magnifying glass help, but only if you've got the eyes."



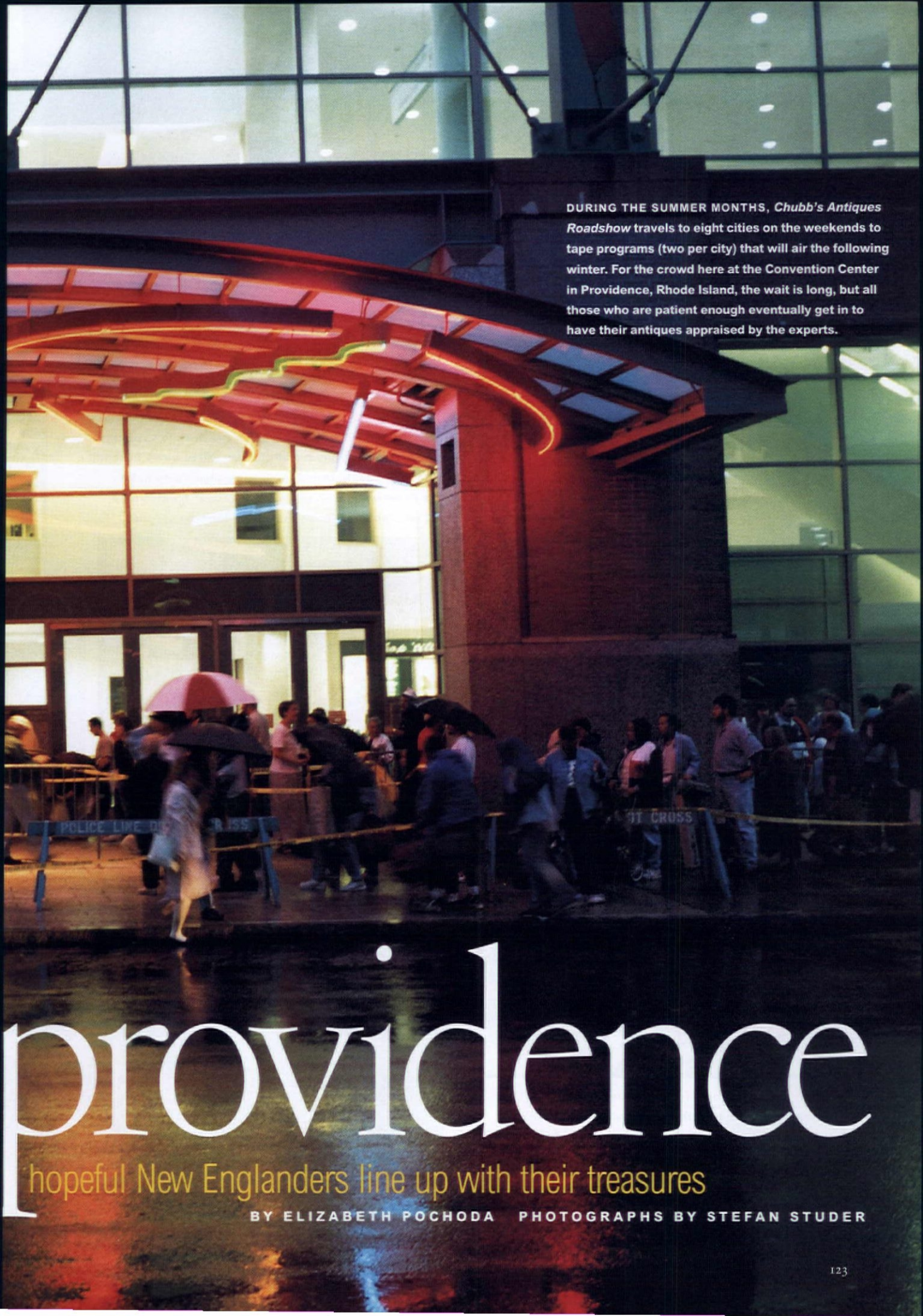


THE MAHOGANY DOORS leading to the library, left, are among the custom-made elements that give the apartment its period feeling. The rosewood-grain center table is attributed to Deming & Bulkley, New York, ca. 1825. The carved mahogany armchairs are attributed to Thomas Constantine, New York, ca. 1820. THE PAINTED MAPLE récamier couch, right, was made in Philadelphia ca. 1810–1820. THE TILT-TOP CENTER dining table, top right, is attributed to Anthony Quervelle, Philadelphia, ca. 1830. Sources, see back of book.



divine

As *Antiques Roadshow* rolls into Rhode Island



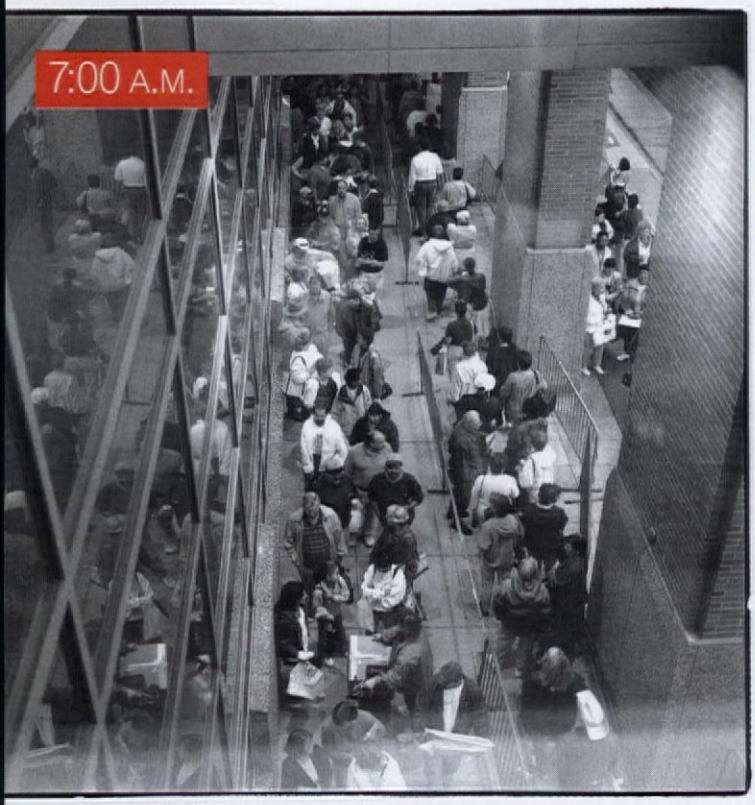
DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS, *Chubb's Antiques Roadshow* travels to eight cities on the weekends to tape programs (two per city) that will air the following winter. For the crowd here at the Convention Center in Providence, Rhode Island, the wait is long, but all those who are patient enough eventually get in to have their antiques appraised by the experts.

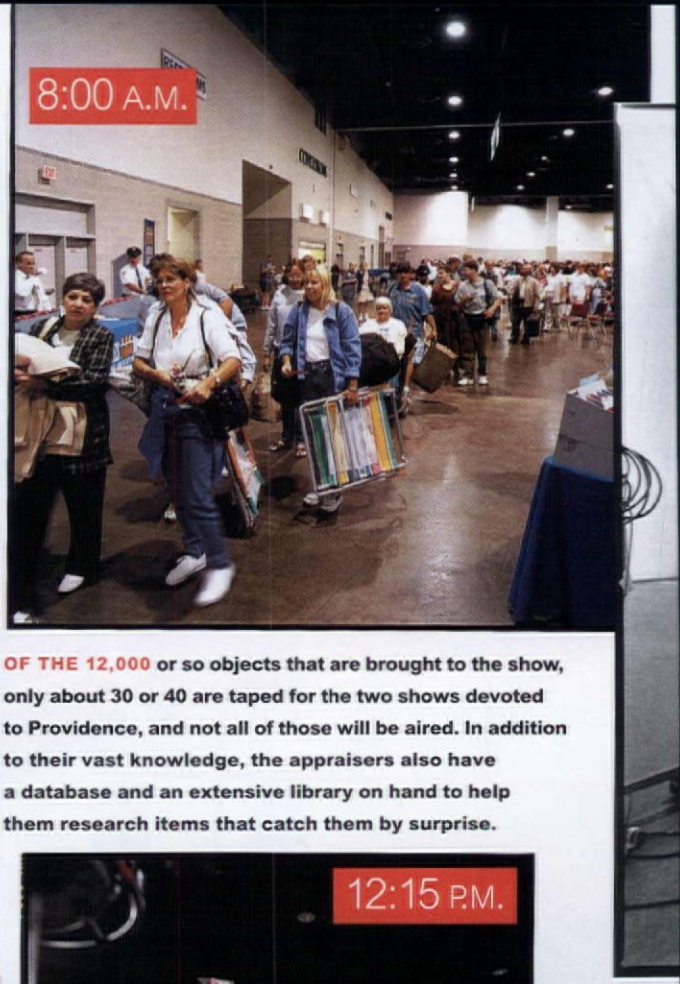
providence

hopeful New Englanders line up with their treasures

BY ELIZABETH POCHODA PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEFAN STUDER

One for the money . . .

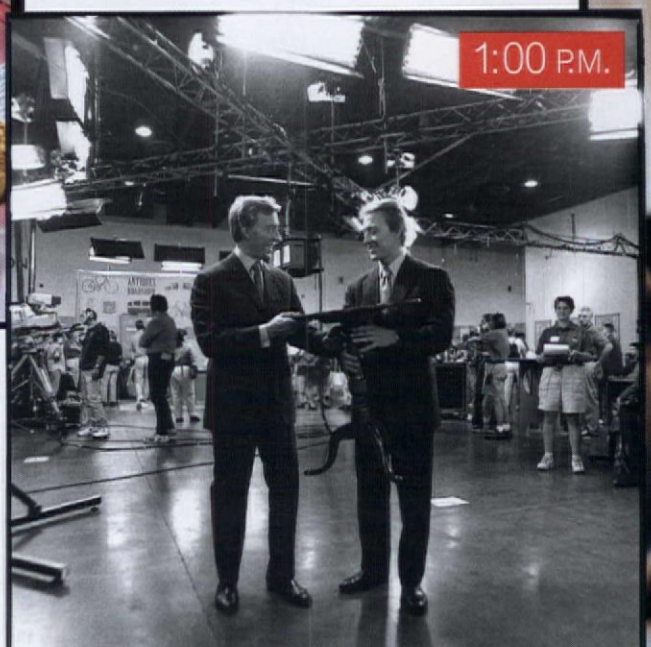




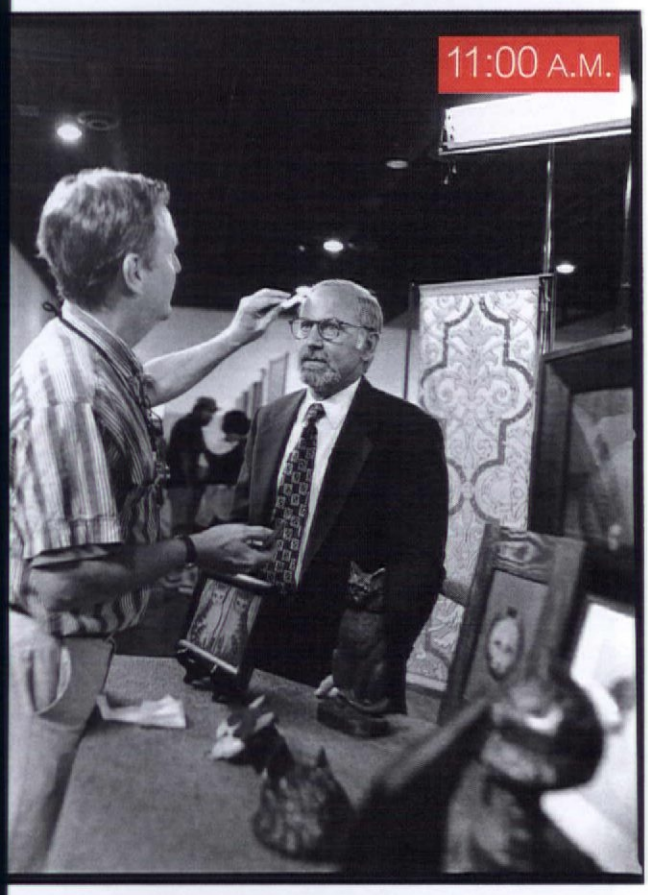
OF THE 12,000 or so objects that are brought to the show, only about 30 or 40 are taped for the two shows devoted to Providence, and not all of those will be aired. In addition to their vast knowledge, the appraisers also have a database and an extensive library on hand to help them research items that catch them by surprise.







THE PATIENCE OF THE CROWD is surpassed only by that of the appraisers, like Frank H. Boos, above, who evaluate thousands of good, bad, and outrageous things during the eight-hour day. When the quality of the object is embarrassing or an outright fake, the tactful experts still manage to offer up interesting observations for the guests to take home with them. The show has made the Keno twins, Leigh and Leslie, right, so popular that they are frequently stopped for their autographs.





BY RAINY DAYBREAK, the pilgrims lined up for the Providence stop of *Chubb's Antiques Roadshow* are 6,000 strong. They move through the wet carrying paintings, swords, chairs, and silver, wrapped in Hefty bags, stacked on Radio Flyer wagons, rolled in shopping carts, balanced on wheelchairs. Like tailgaters, but without the booze or boorishness, they enjoy the wait in line as much as the main event. They have come to have their possessions appraised, to look over one another's stuff, and to be part of the PBS program that's so big, it's bigger even than *Barney*!

Although it's common to account for *Roadshow*'s popularity by comparing it to older programs that celebrated luck over pluck (like *Strike It Rich*), a little time in line with *Roadshow* devotees tells another story. Yes, just about everyone you meet is aware of the big scores that the show dramatizes with exaggerated sound effects and pop-eyed graphics—the woman who picked up a John and Thomas Seymore table for $25 at a yard sale that the Keno twins, Leigh and Leslie, appraised at $250,000 (it later sold at Sotheby's for $500,000). But, except for the truly deluded (the woman with the dime-store Dalí, for instance), many of the people here are like Skip, a young guy who tells me he "won't be disappointed" if the sawdust doll he has brought turns out to be not worth much. He thinks it has a lot of character, and he looks forward to having an expert validate something he loves.

In a culture of built-in obsolescence and disposable goods, *Roadshow* represents for many people the lure of authenticity and the durability of the past. If not for that, these people could be filing into the grand opening of Providence's new mall, which is also taking place this weekend, right across the street. But the attractions of mass-produced items are, for the moment, outweighed by those that are unique.

Everyone in line knows the drill: they can bring two items to be appraised by one of the 60 or so experts from the big auction houses and a host of independent dealers. Only about 40 of their vast number will be chosen to be taped for the two *Roadshows* devoted to Providence. Those odds and the long, long wait are fine with the faithful, who don't seem especially interested in being on TV.

A jolly fellow who describes himself as a freelance production manager is working the crowd, videotaping interviews to be used by stations across the country to promote the show. "Tell me what you like about the *Roadshow*," he asks. When he doesn't get what he's

AFTER SOME TIME IN THE GREEN ROOM, a guest on the show gets some makeup, top, before the taped appraisal of his collection of items devoted to cats. Although *Roadshow* has strict rules forbidding buying or selling on the premises, it does provide a table near the exit, left, where appraisers and auction houses can leave their business cards for anyone wishing to arrange a future transaction.

Two for the show . . .

after, he coaches the crowd. "It's a commercial-free zone, right?" he chants. "Appraisers do this for free." "On a good day," he tells me, "I can make people say almost anything."

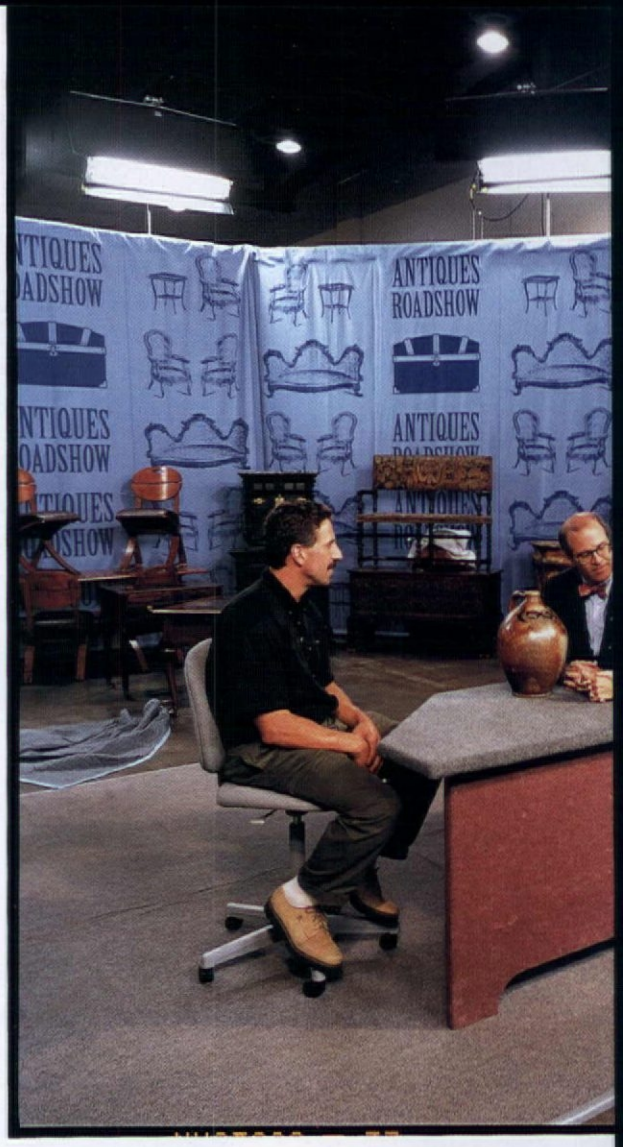
He's right about the appraisers. They travel to the show at their own expense. It's excellent exposure for the auction houses, a prestige opportunity for independent dealers, and a good thing for the antiques biz (unless you are a dealer trying to pry antiques loose from people who are now clued in to their worth). But isn't there something a little faux naïve about insisting that money is not in the air? After all, when asked, appraisers often give their phone numbers to guests, presumably to arrange a transaction at a later date, and you can't miss the table with stacks of dealers' business cards positioned at the exit of the hall. But so what?

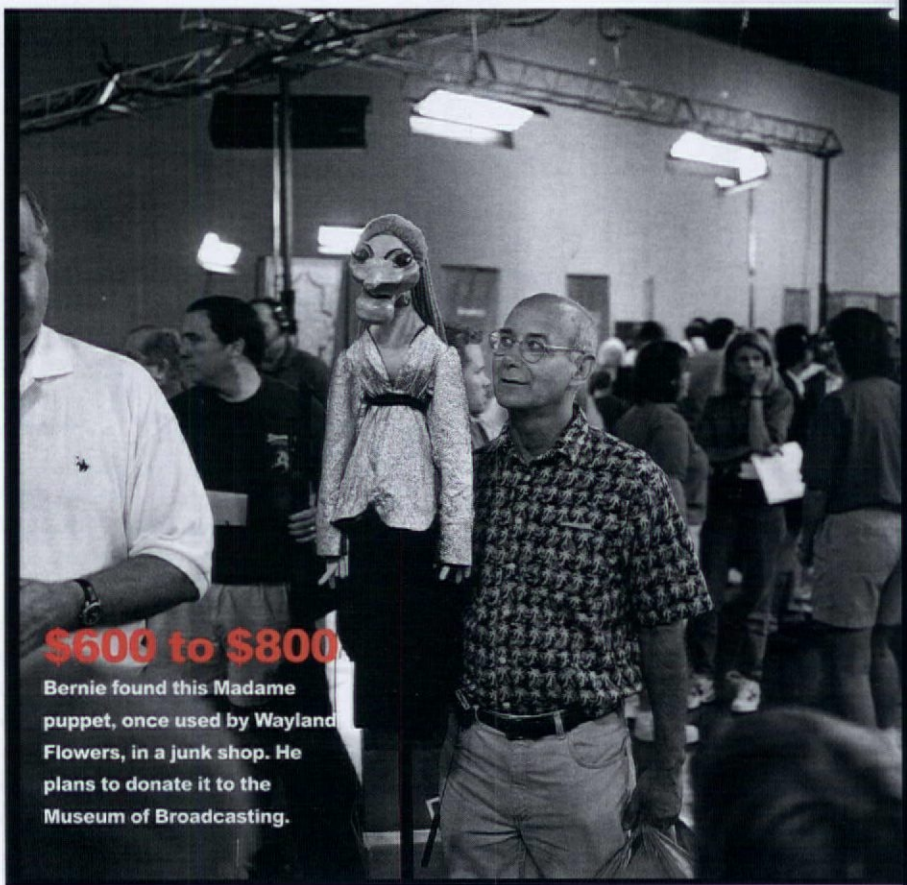
AND YET, FROM the Nixieland music at the beginning to its digitalized image of a cute attic trunk, the televised part of *Antiques Roadshow* seems to prefer Americana to America and, in the segments on local history, to treat the past as if it were a theme park. (The British show from which the American was cloned is less sentimental and also, interestingly, less likely to play up the big score.) In any case, what actually goes on between the appraisers, who are unfailingly enthusiastic and informative, and the guests has nothing to do with nostalgia.

Take, for instance, Dave, who has brought a splendid ovoid stoneware jug he dug out of a bottle dump. As John Hays of Christie's goes over it out of Dave's earshot, a publicist from the show takes me aside with a mysterious instruction. "Respect his privacy," she warns me, "and don't tell him what it's worth." I guess she means, don't ruin what the producers hope will be Dave's "Land sakes!" response when Hays suggests on camera that the jug should fetch somewhere between $3,000 and $4,000 at auction.

The odd thing is that many of the people you meet here already have some idea of what their stuff is worth. Dave tells me later that he was not much surprised by the appraisal of his "treasure" (a word the show insists on using, probably for its folksy value). He may look like Li'l Abner, and the producers may wish to exaggerate the naïveté of his style next to the sophistication of their bespoke-clad experts, but honest appraisals are hard to come by, and Dave's here to make sure of what he has.

The real drama of Dave and his seemingly anonymous jug comes in watching Hays examine it until he has identified its origin (New York City), use (for linseed oil), date (1795), and maker (Thomas Commereau). There's a glimpse of the American past, repeated dozens of times a day at *Roadshow,* that's far more thrilling than the "shock" of a hefty price tag.





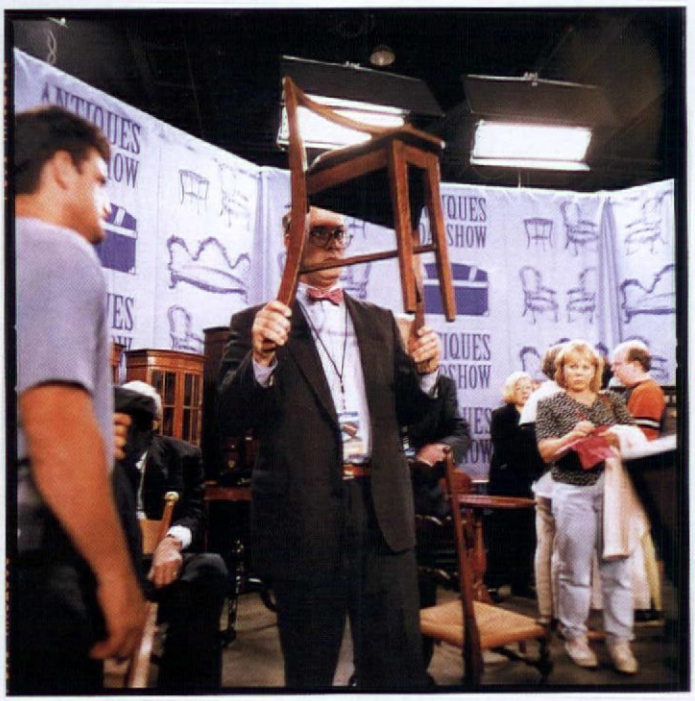
$600 to $800

Bernie found this Madame puppet, once used by Wayland Flowers, in a junk shop. He plans to donate it to the Museum of Broadcasting.

$3,000 to $4,000

A TV crew member gets Dave, far left, and John Hays of Christie's ready to appear on camera with the stoneware jug Dave dug up in a bottle dump.





$800 to $1,200

John Hays gives a Federal-style chair the third degree before discussing its origin and assessing its probable value.

$1,500 to $2,000

Of the Beatles memorabilia one collector brought, the most valuable item was a John Lennon signature.



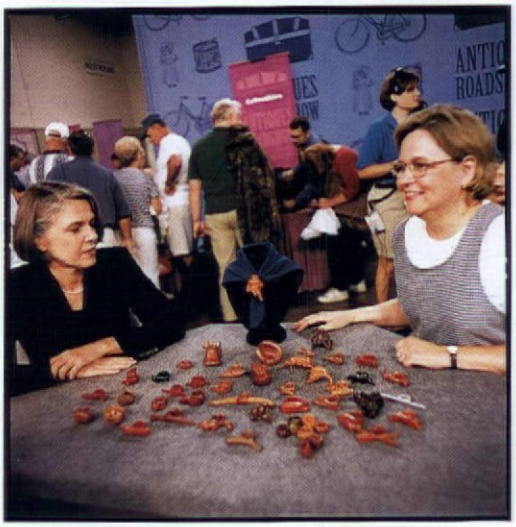


$80,000 to $125,000

This woman knew all about her Edward Farmer gold and jade jewelry box, but she was pleased to have an appraiser confirm her information.

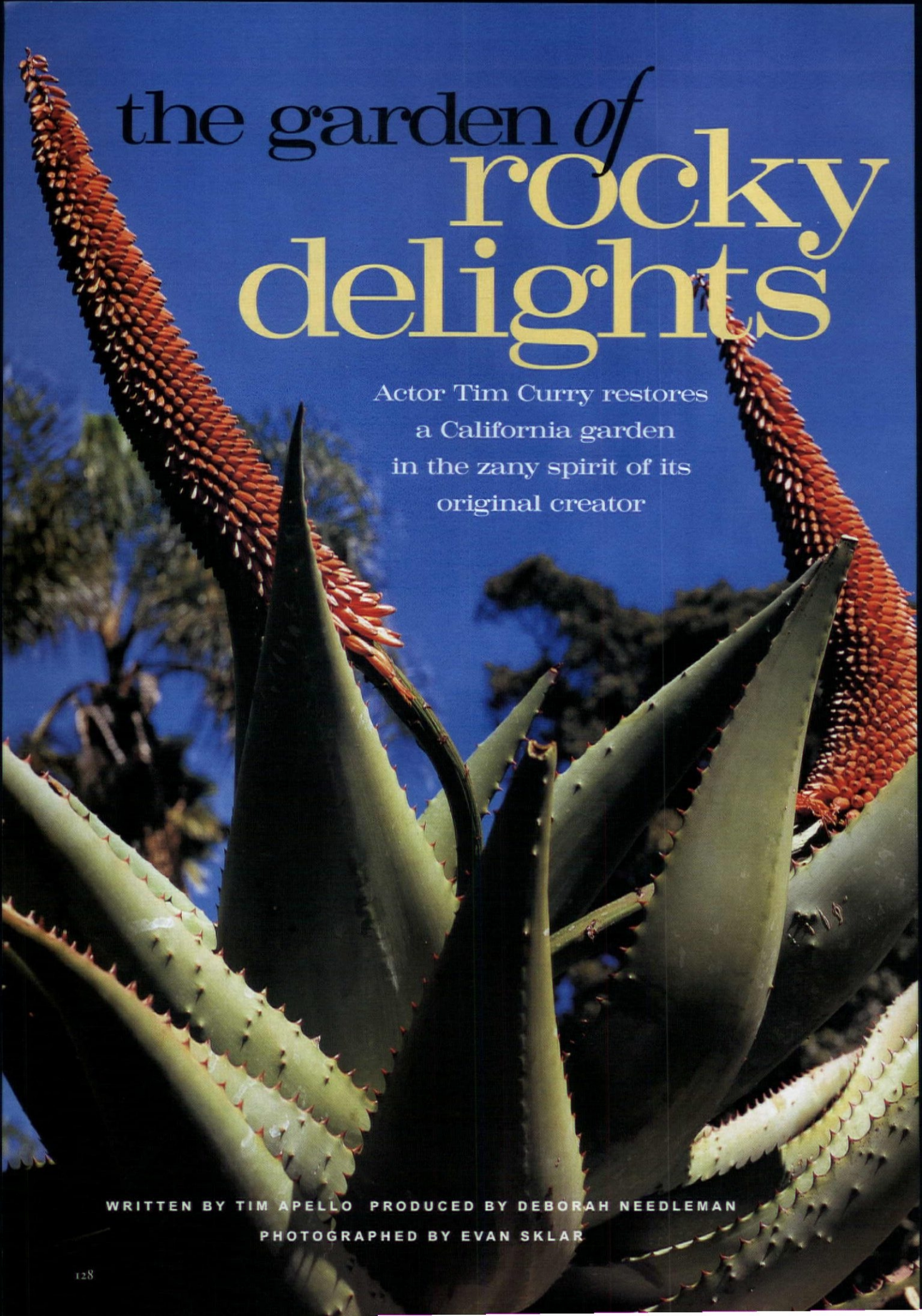
$1,000

These Boy Scout neckerchief slides cost their owner a dollar at a flea market. Karen M. Keane of Skinner suggested that they were all made by a single carver around 1940.



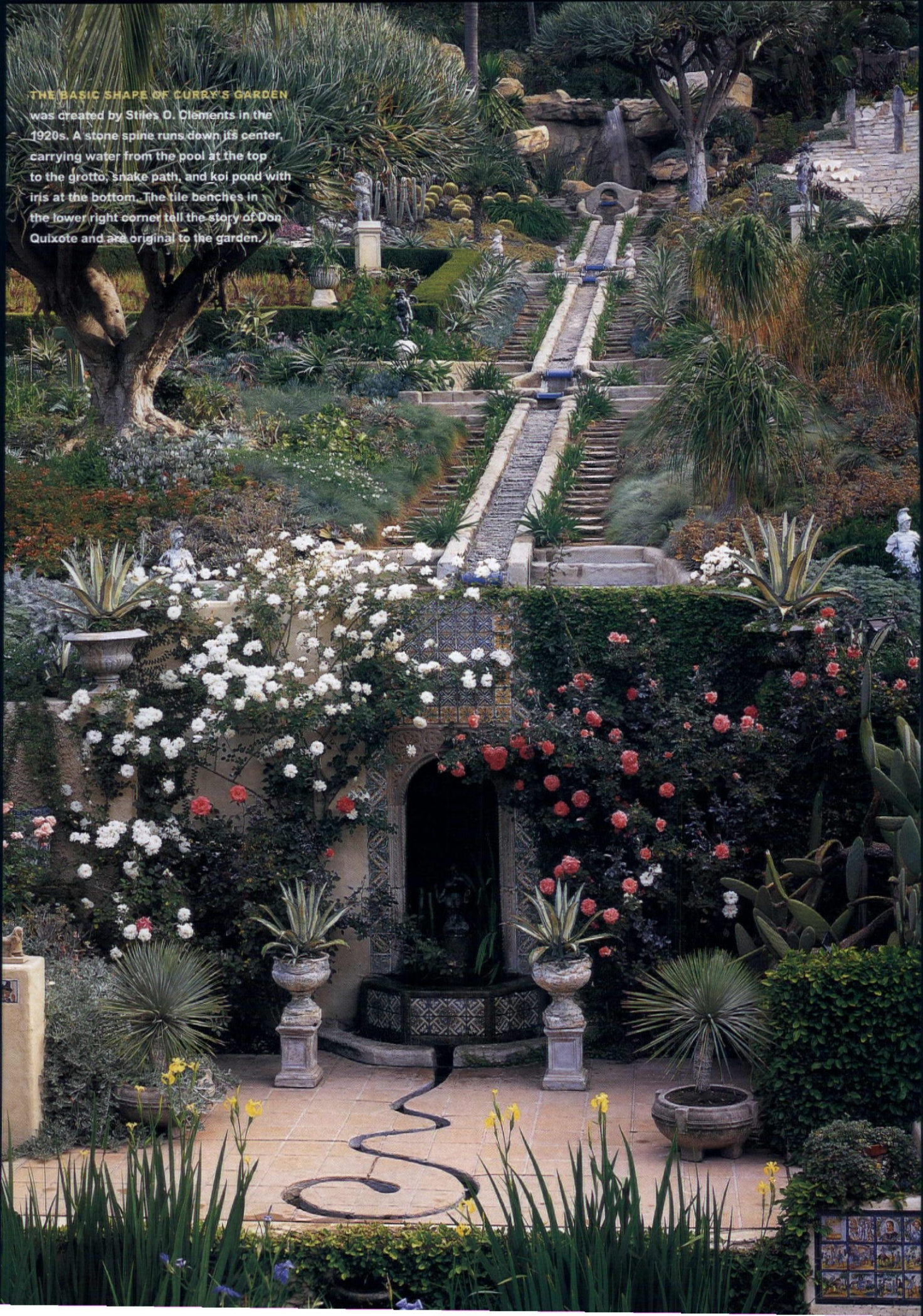
the garden *of* rocky delights

Actor Tim Curry restores a California garden in the zany spirit of its original creator



WRITTEN BY TIM APELLO PRODUCED BY DEBORAH NEEDLEMAN

PHOTOGRAPHED BY EVAN SKLAR



THE BASIC SHAPE OF CURRY'S GARDEN was created by Stiles O. Clements in the 1920s. A stone spine runs down its center, carrying water from the pool at the top to the grotto, snake path, and koi pond with iris at the bottom. The tile benches in the lower right corner tell the story of Don Quixote and are original to the garden.

YOU LOAD 40 TONS, and what do you get? Tim Curry's elegantly extravagant garden, a two-acre bowl carved into a hillside near Griffith Park in Los Feliz, California, just down the hill from Frank Lloyd Wright's Ennis House.

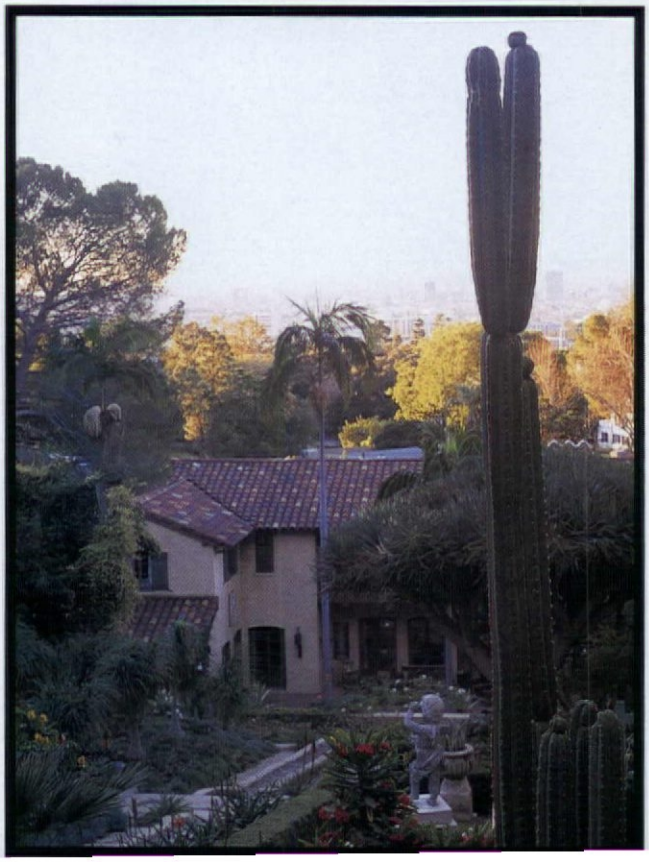
When he bought the place six years ago, all that the star of *Rocky Horror* had to do was dig up 40 tons of detritus—perhaps humming his 1970s pop tune "I Do the Rock." What lay beneath the mess was beyond the dreams of Long John Silver, Curry's character in *Muppet Treasure Island:* a horticultural treasure designed by architect Stiles O. Clements in the 1920s. "It was just wreckage, really," Curry says. "There was scrub and rocks and glass and mess, and skunk nests. Raccoons and coyotes used to just stroll by. Three deer lived here. There was no water on this garden in five years."

Undaunted by the arid chaos (and abetted by his landscape designer, Barry Sattels), Curry dug in like Indiana Jones and found lost worlds of design. "It has been a sort of archaeological dig," he says, "because we'd dig down to plant something and hit stone or concrete under four feet of soil."

What they unearthed turned out to be long-buried paths that wind up to a spectacular natural-stone pool whose waterfall feeds a Moorish cascade. The stone spine runs down the center of the symmetrical garden, the water flowing past tall septuagenarian palms, old dragon trees hung with Moroccan lamps, and pines occupied by red-tailed hawks, and terminates at the foot of the hill in a rectangular lotus pond flanked by a bench with tiles that tell the entire story of Don Quixote in pictures (an early version of the Hollywood storyboard, as I was not the first guest to suggest).

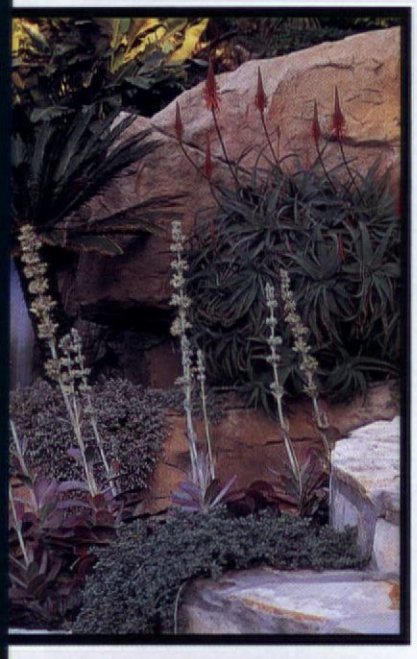
As if in honor of his origins in Cheshire, Curry's pond is guarded by an English statue of Pan in a portico graced by a perpetual, very English, artificial drizzle. "What's extraordinary, really," says Curry,





THE GARDEN IS DRAMATIC in its overall appearance and in its details. Its restoration and maintenance have given Curry, above, what amounts to a second career. A TOWERING CEREUS CACTUS and putti, left, guard the house. THE CASCADE, opposite page top right, is lined with blue *Senecio mandraliscae,* red spikes of *Aloe ferox,* and *Justicia aurea.* CURRY REFURBISHED the swimming pool, opposite page below. AMONG THE ECLECTIC PLANT collection are, center from top, a floss silk tree, spiky crassula and ferny *Cycas revoluta,* and brain cactus, *Opuntia microdasys.*













BESIDES THE POTS OF YUCCA and the tall *Opuntia* framing the walk, this page, the garden boasts an abundance of roses and irises. Looking at photographs from *House & Garden* in 1925 enabled Curry to restore the thatched hut at poolside, opposite page. **THE ROCK PLANTERS** hold *Aeonium arboreum* 'Zwartkop.'

"is this sort of Inca pool at the top, this strange South American fantasy. It looks like a place where you sacrifice virgins." Asked whether any virgins have been sacrificed there, Curry flashes a Cheshire smile: "Not yet." He goes on, pointing to the thatched-roof *Palapa* next to the pool. "We only knew it was there from the photographs of it in a 1925 *House & Garden*. And, of course, the holes for the poles were still there. So we just rebuilt it."

Curry's gardening philosophy is half fanciful—he tentatively plans to add a ziggurat with a base of concrete scavenged from local roadwork projects, incorporating tiles by Oliver Stone's set designer and tin Venetian canal lamps from the designer of Doris Duke's Hawaiian estate, Shangri-La—and half earnest historic preservationist. Like an actor researching a role he plans to interpret boldly, Curry has strived to get into the head of the garden's original designer.

"I THINK THE POOL is very much based on the sacrificial pool at Chichén Itzá," Curry says. He found a lone stone bench facing the pool and extended it into a giant sculpture-studded staircase amphitheater of Lompac scrambled-egg stone, a modern approximation of the original rock, long ago quarried out. The white stone comes in handy on dark nights, because he hasn't gotten around to lighting the gardens yet.

"Lighting is a whole other deal," muses Curry. "That's probably five movies away." If you wonder why Curry has done 20 or so cartoon character voices in addition to his film and TV commitments, his garden is the reason. "I started laboring long and hard in the cartoon studios doing voice-overs because it was the only way I could really justify the expense. Of course, my great dread is that at some point the garden will bankrupt me and it will just revert to nature."

In the meantime Curry is enjoying it. "Although it's a bit tiresome coming up here by flashlight," he says, "in high summer the night-blooming jasmine is in full flower and it smells like a Turkish brothel, and it's wonderful to swim. You can't see very far, but you can see the lights of the city. Besides, you're guarded by putti." He gestures at the Victorian stone angels who stand sentry below.

Curry is an autodidact in the garden arts. Early on, he did *(Cont. on page 167)*





MANY OF THE NUMEROUS STONE PATHS, this page, had to be dug up from beneath layers of detritus and overgrown vegetation. **THE PLANTINGS** throughout the garden, opposite page, display a mix of hardness and softness, shown in this combination of *Agave americana* 'Mediopicta' and *Convolvulus mauritanicus*.

site plan

1 House
2 Terrace
3 Lotus and koi pond
4 Moorish grotto
5 Dragon trees
6 Cascade
7 Formal gardens
8 Amphitheater
9 Grotto and waterfall
10 Patio
11 Rock pool
12 Upper patio
13 Palapa
14 Tropical garden
15 Torrey pine and live oak woodland



the

LIKE A COLLAGE, the exterior of the house is an assemblage of shapes and proportions. Its transparency allows it to be permeated by its natural surroundings—even the smooth stucco exterior is designed to catch the shadows that are cast throughout the day.



WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH POCHODA PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOE D'URSO

PRODUCED BY LORA ZARUBIN

great improviser

In a house overlooking the sea, designer Joe D'Urso creates an ever-changing environment for a nature-loving client





D'URSO IS A MASTER of the counterintuitive. The low mahogany cabinet he designed for the soaring entrance hall, this page, successfully defies conventional wisdom. It also emphasizes the 16-foot-high fossil slab. THE STUDIO, opposite page, is a medley of the house's sturdy materials—custom-made steel window, mahogany floor, and a glass-and-steel table designed by D'Urso. The fossil pieces are of armored fish and a leaf.

LIKE SAUL BELLOW'S great creation, Augie March, Joe D'Urso goes about things as he has taught himself: freestyle. Like Augie, D'Urso is an improviser, a standout in a stale world. In his hands, uptight modernism takes on character, soul, and plenty of spice. And like Augie, he's a funny foot always in search of a funny shoe. He has found the right shoe in the past—famously in a collection of furniture for Knoll and a showroom for Esprit, less famously but no less memorably in domestic interiors in and around New York City. (He is designing a furniture collection for Donghia that will appear early next year.) Joe D'Urso doesn't do a lot of design projects, but whenever he finds the right shoe, as he did a few years ago in East Hampton, Long Island, the results are wonderfully unexpected.

The site, set handsomely between the ocean and a wooded grove, was occupied by a charming single-story house built in the 1960s that the new owner liked for its tidy size and its transparency. The idea was to build around it, making a somewhat larger house with space for an elaborate observatory. D'Urso's solution was, in the end, to tear down the little house and build another, keeping everything about the original that appealed to him and his client. It's a material







THE THEME OF NATURE, announced by the fossilized palm frond and fish, far left, in the living room, is carried out in the furnishings. The leather-and-wood vintage safari armchairs are Kaare Klint designs, ca. 1930. A fossilized tree trunk serves as the coffee table. The bamboo chair is from American Wing, Bridgehampton, NY. The curtains, by Jana Bennett Interiors, are a dark natural linen from the Ulster Linen Company, NYC. D'Urso designed the waxed raw steel frame for the fireplace.



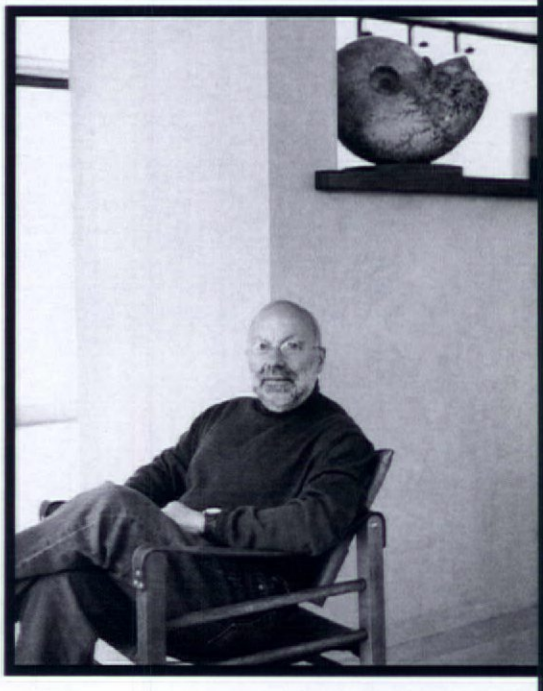
THE VARIED HEIGHTS in the informal sitting area, these pages, are another design-school don't that D'Urso has turned to his advantage. The primitive feel of the room, with its Jurassic crocodile fossil, concrete walls, and Rais & Wittus woodstove, is balanced by the delicate Noguchi light sculpture and canvas awning. **THE MAHOGANY TABLE** designed by D'Urso, opposite page below, will be available at Donghia early next year.

solution with a soulful base: you can still see straight through the house from the grove to the ocean, and you can still feel the modesty of the original before the natural wonders surrounding it.

When D'Urso and his client approached James Merrell, the architect was intrigued. Like anyone of his caliber, Merrell prefers to work on his own designs, but since he had long admired the audacity of D'Urso's work, he decided to step outside his profession and "see architecture from Joe's point of view." D'Urso, he says, has the ability to "squeeze more from architectural materials than most architects. He is always investigating different ways of doing things."

And so to four years of design and building, which both parties describe as more like working on a living sculpture or a collage than building a house. "My work transforms itself in the process of building, and that's what helps the client to participate," D'Urso says. "Practically the whole house changed as we went along." Only the observatory and the decision to use stucco on the exterior made it through the entire design process.

The reasonable scale of the house, about 4,000 square feet, is meant to suit a client whose main interest is nature and who does not want the distractions of a staff. The materials—concrete, bluestone, raw steel, limestone, mahogany—are perfect for the kind of rough treatment he plans to give them. As for stucco inside and out, D'Urso chose it because it relates well to the beach and because its smooth surface allows for the play of shadows across its surface; from its one color there are many in the course of a day. Like glass and mahogany elsewhere in the house,





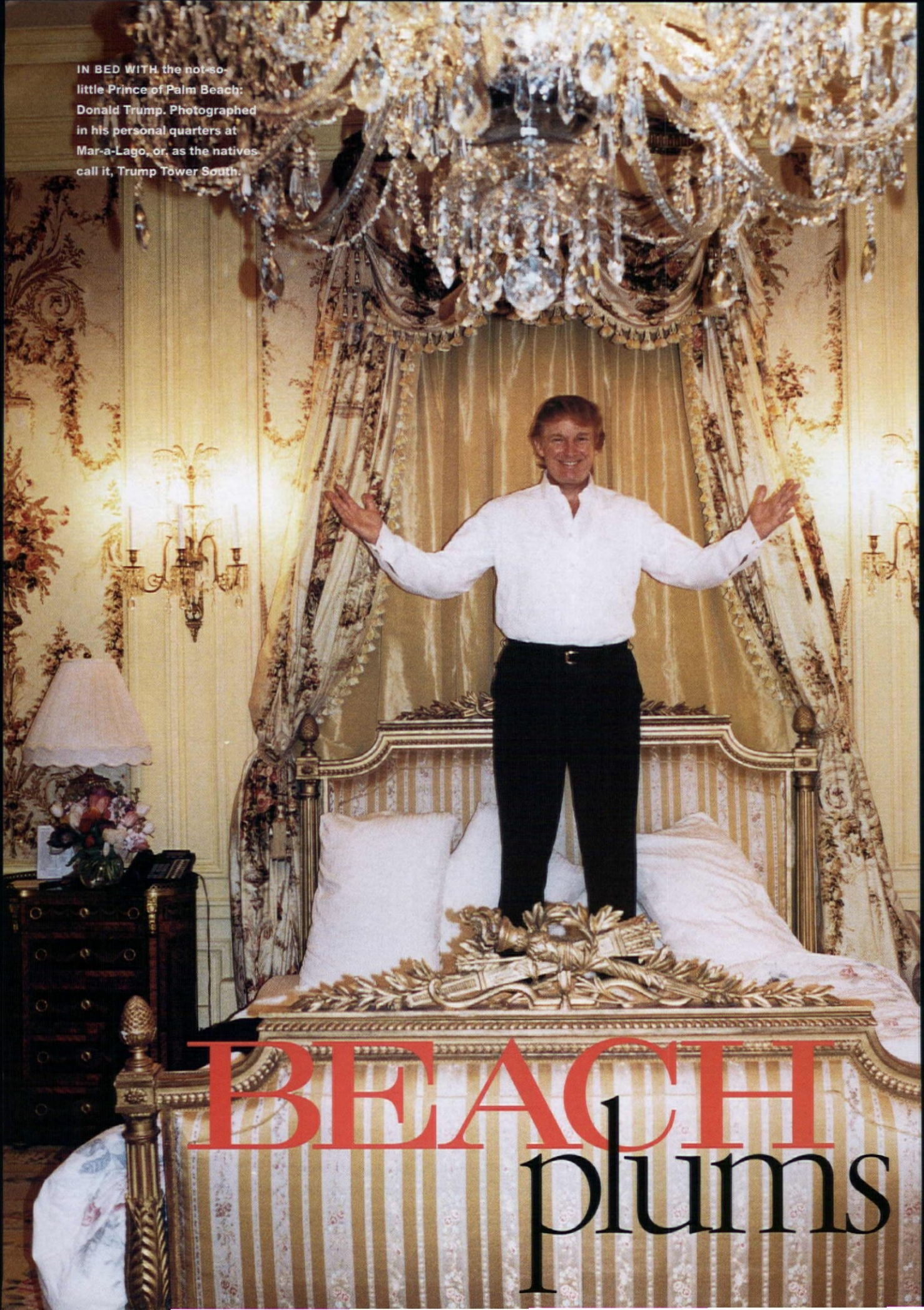


D'URSO FIGURES THAT CHAIRS already have legs, so why clutter a table with more. His granite table, opposite page, is built into the floor. The cabinetry is mahogany veneer, with panels of textured glass on the island. IN THE BEDROOM, this page, a portion of the wall, covered in seagrass with a mahogany frame, serves as a headboard. Sources, see back of book.

stucco has been made to do everything it is capable of, and then some.

From exterior to interior, the spaces are unusual and D'Urso's decisions about them surprising. The external doors are of different heights; the interior and exterior walls don't line up with a horizon, as architects like them to; the mixture of textures and materials is different in every room; and the height often changes abruptly through a space, giving each room its own identity. The overall effect is that of a collage of improbably harmonious elements, and although it may sound hectic, it is anything but. Dramatic, yes, but calm and classical, almost as if you were being commanded to stop and contemplate in these rooms—which, in fact, you are.

D'Urso has listened carefully to his client. He may have had the kitchen table built into the floor to make sure no slacker moves it from its perfectly positioned ocean view, but when he saw some small fossils in his client's apartment, he paid attention. After the house was finished, they went in search of larger fossils, eventually obtaining the huge palm frond, the fish, and the reptile that are hung like paintings on the walls. As you climb the stairs next to the fossilized school of fish, you move, they seem to move, and the volumes of space move around you. A man whose primary interest is nature could not have a more responsive environment.



IN BED WITH the not-so-little Prince of Palm Beach: Donald Trump. Photographed in his personal quarters at Mar-a-Lago, or, as the natives call it, Trump Tower South.

BEACH plums

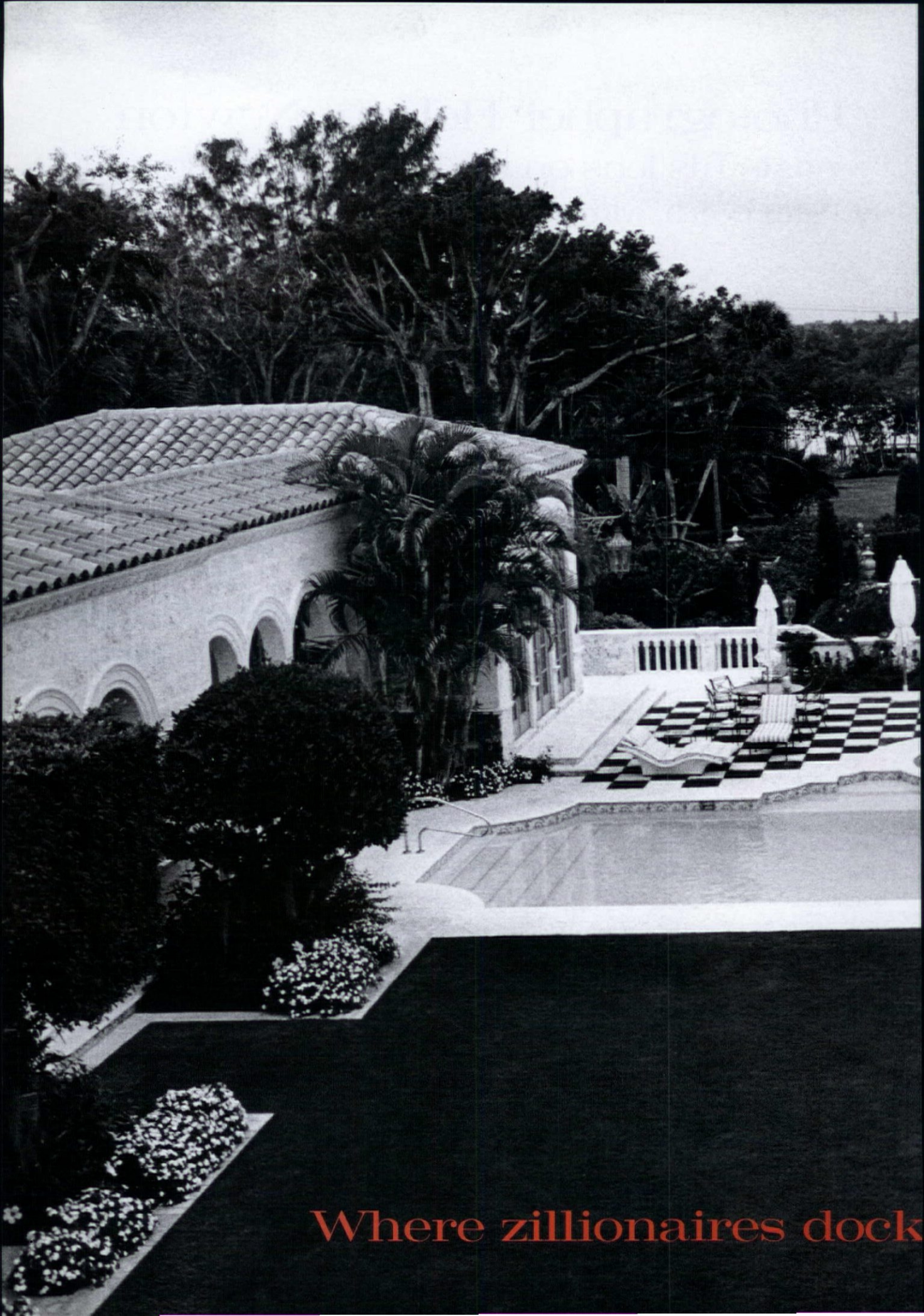
Photographer Helmut Newton casts his lens on the quirky splendors of Palm Beach, with our man William Norwich in tow

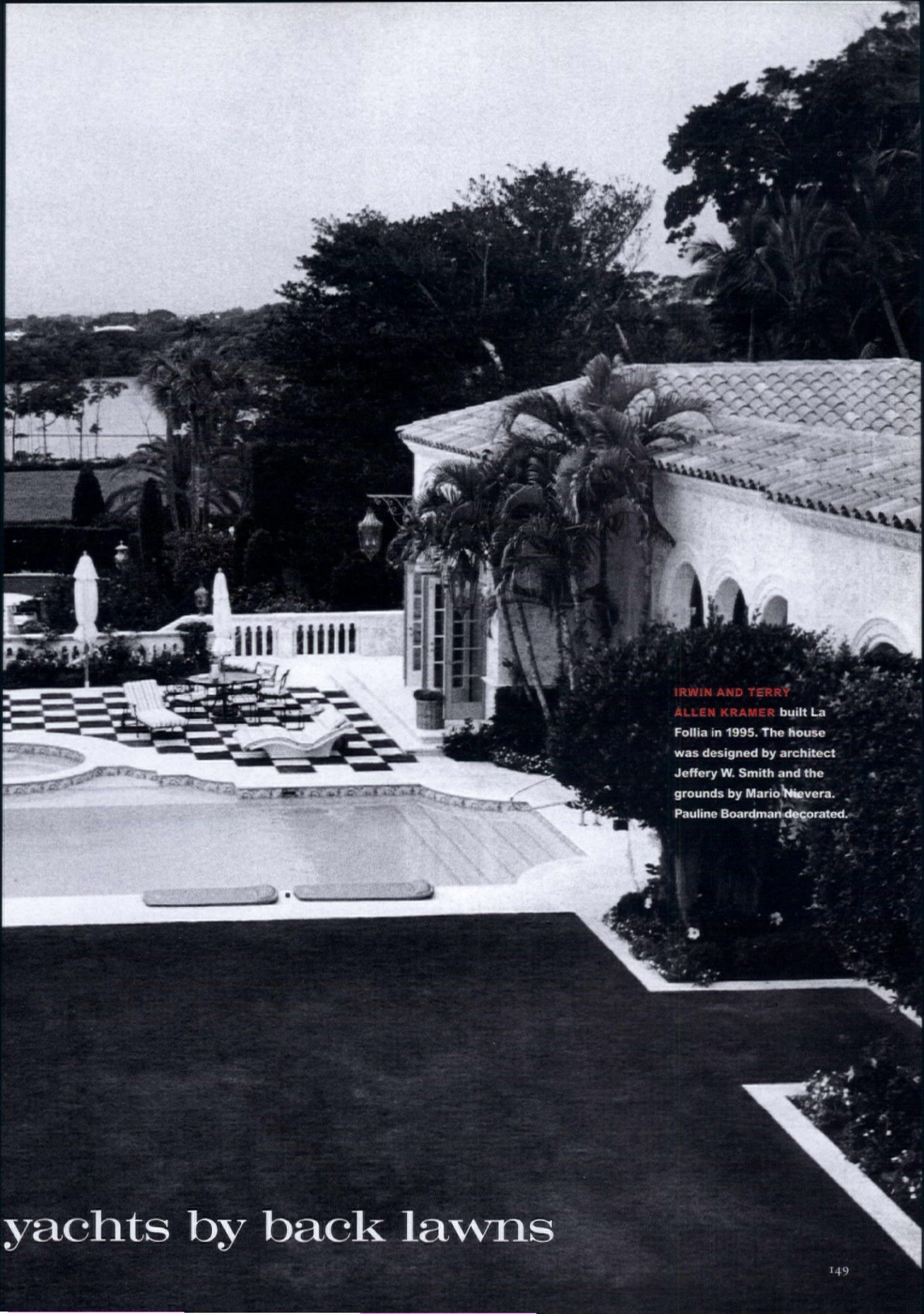


SAND CASTLE **The grand Breakers hotel has stood since 1926, fortified against hurricanes by concrete, steel, and a huge seawall. Winds from local scandals, however, blow quickly through the building.**

HELMUT NEWTON LIKES IT HOT, especially in winter. But he hadn't visited Palm Beach in more than a decade, until this past March. He remembered a certain "faded glory. Houses that had fallen into exquisite disrepair. Grandeur, but gone. Like a silent-movie star." But early into his driving tour of this poodle-perfect terrain, which measures just under four square miles and is joined to mainland Florida by three forbidding bridges, he realized that the faded glory was a thing of the past. "So many of these new houses look like glorified funeral parlors," he observes. Wall Street prosperity has prompted a building boom in Palm Beach. Much has been torn down so that new piles, these new dream houses of the new rich, can go up. On the horizon: some ten new houses that will exceed 10,000 square feet, as well as many more wannabe castles. All told, there are about 2,400 houses in Palm Beach, and some 3,500 condominiums. Supposedly, there are also a thousand real estate agents. Design is entertainment here.

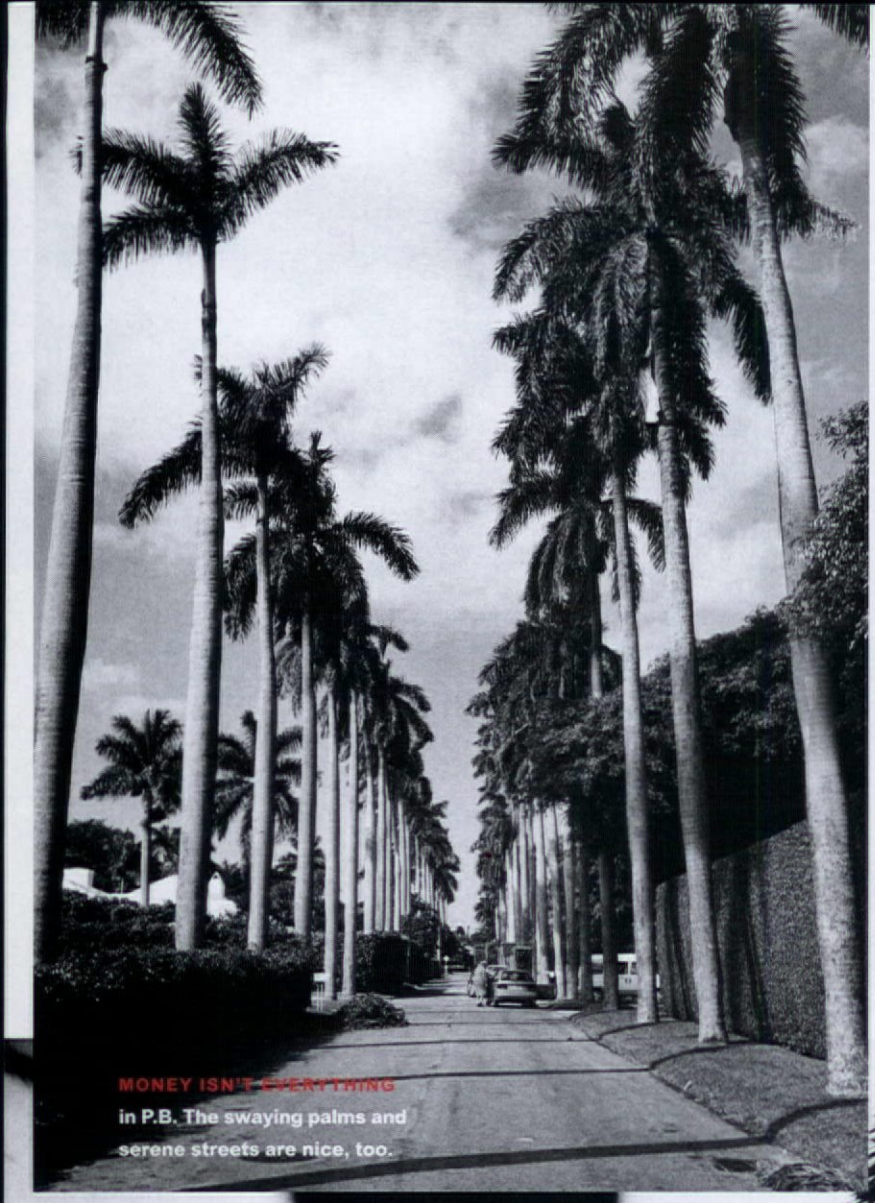
Nonetheless, calling at Irwin and Terry Allen Kramer's house, La Follia, on the Atlantic Ocean, and at Donald J. Trump's Mar-a-Lago, a Joseph Urban landmark built by cereal heiress Marjorie Merriweather Post, delighted Newton. There are great views if you walk the Lake Trail along the Intercoastal Waterway, where zillionaires dock their yachts practically on the back lawns of the rich. Or you can watch the surfers who come from the mainland to chase Atlantic waves, and wonder who is having more fun now, the surfers or the silky grandees who never get wet.


Where zillionaires dock



IRWIN AND TERRY ALLEN KRAMER built La Follia in 1995. The house was designed by architect Jeffery W. Smith and the grounds by Mario Nievera. Pauline Boardman decorated.

yachts by back lawns

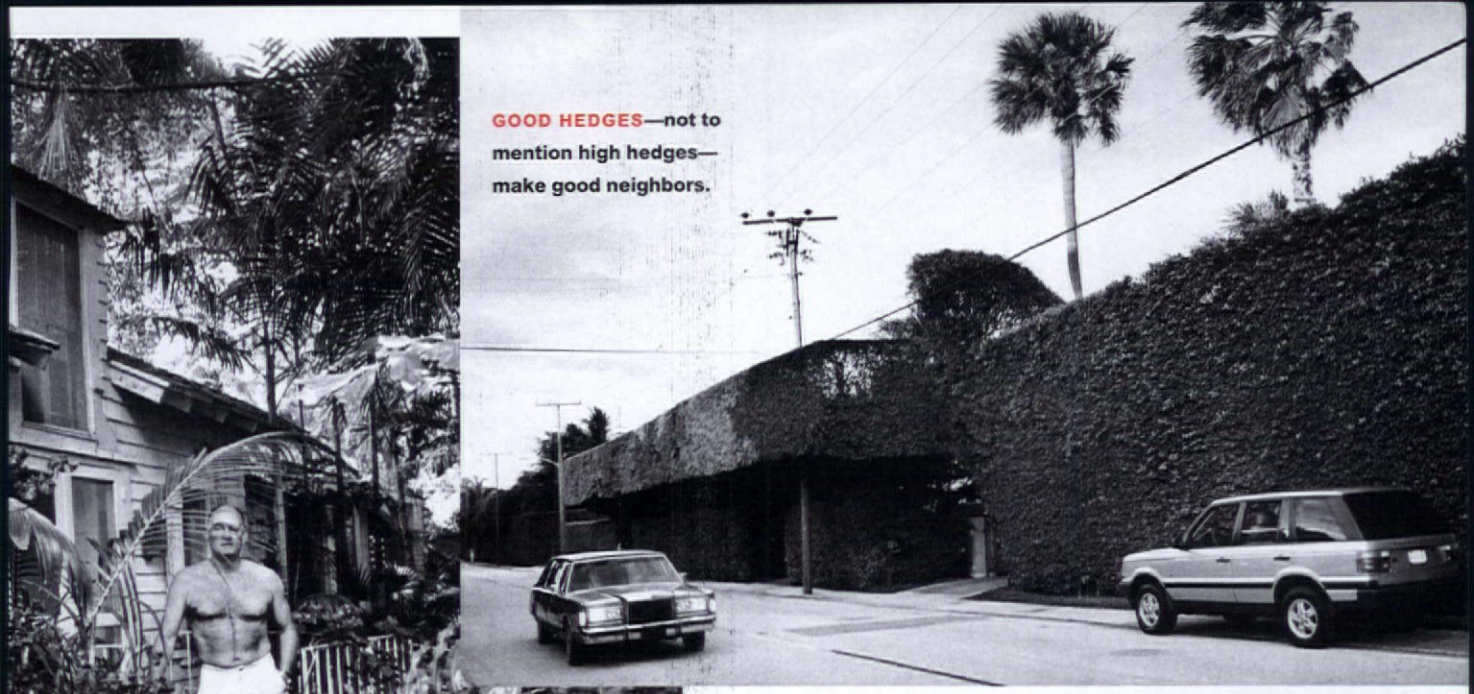


MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING in P.B. The swaying palms and serene streets are nice, too.



FORMER ZOLI MODEL turned gardener Denis LaMarsh at his hideaway.

A BIG HELLO: the entrance to La Follia. The house is made of coquina, a stone from the Caribbean Islands.

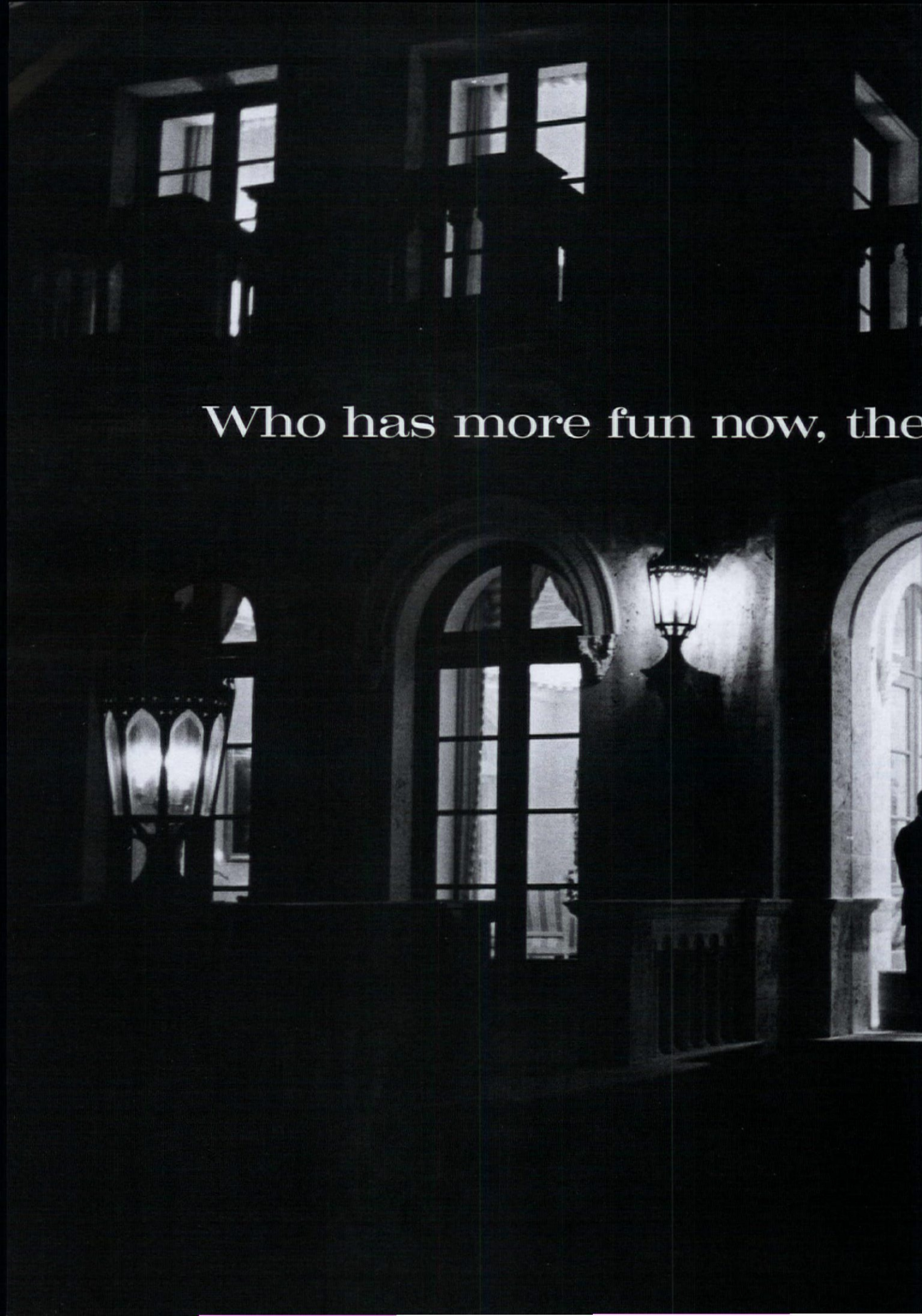


GOOD HEDGES—not to mention high hedges—make good neighbors.

THE UN-BILLIONAIRES: day-tripping surfers.



THE LANDSCAPED gentry: Broadway producer Terry Allen Kramer and her husband, financier Irwin Kramer.


Who has more fun now, the

surfers or the silky grandees?



FROM THE TERRACE at La Follia: Alone, but not alone, Mrs. Kramer watches the ships at sea while the household staff keeps the place safe for civility.

rich simplicity

In his apartment as in his flower arrangements, society's new favorite floral designer, Antony Todd, likes things serene, spare, and superb

BY DEBORAH NEEDLEMAN PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEFAN STUDER



ANTONY TODD TELLS A STORY about his godmother's friend, a famous lady in Paris who went to a milliner known for her breathtaking hats for a last-minute creation. Turning before the mirror, the woman admired the chapeau, but exclaimed in disgust at the high price. The milliner tugged at a ribbon, and the entire hat unraveled. "Here," the hatmaker said, placing the folded fabric in the woman's hand. "This is for free."

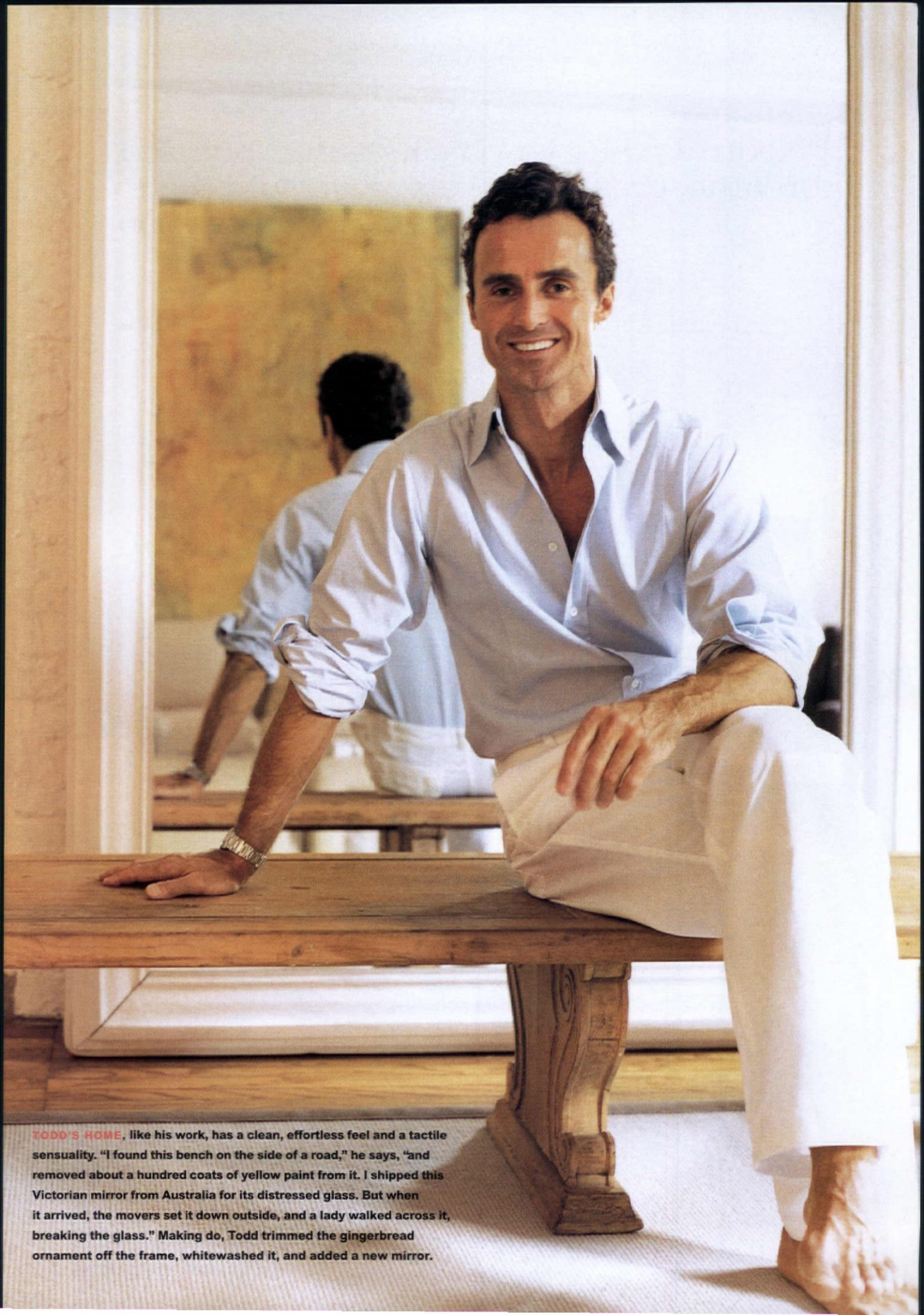
It's a fitting anecdote for Todd, the newest and hottest in the wave of celebrity florists—designers as famed and fabulous as their clients. Unlike his predecessors, who mirrored the times with over-the-top floral confections, Todd is a designer for the new century. His work is utterly stylish and restrained, sensual and calming, "underdone," as he says—but no less costly. He caters to a sophisticated clientele who value his refined talent, and are willing to pay for it.



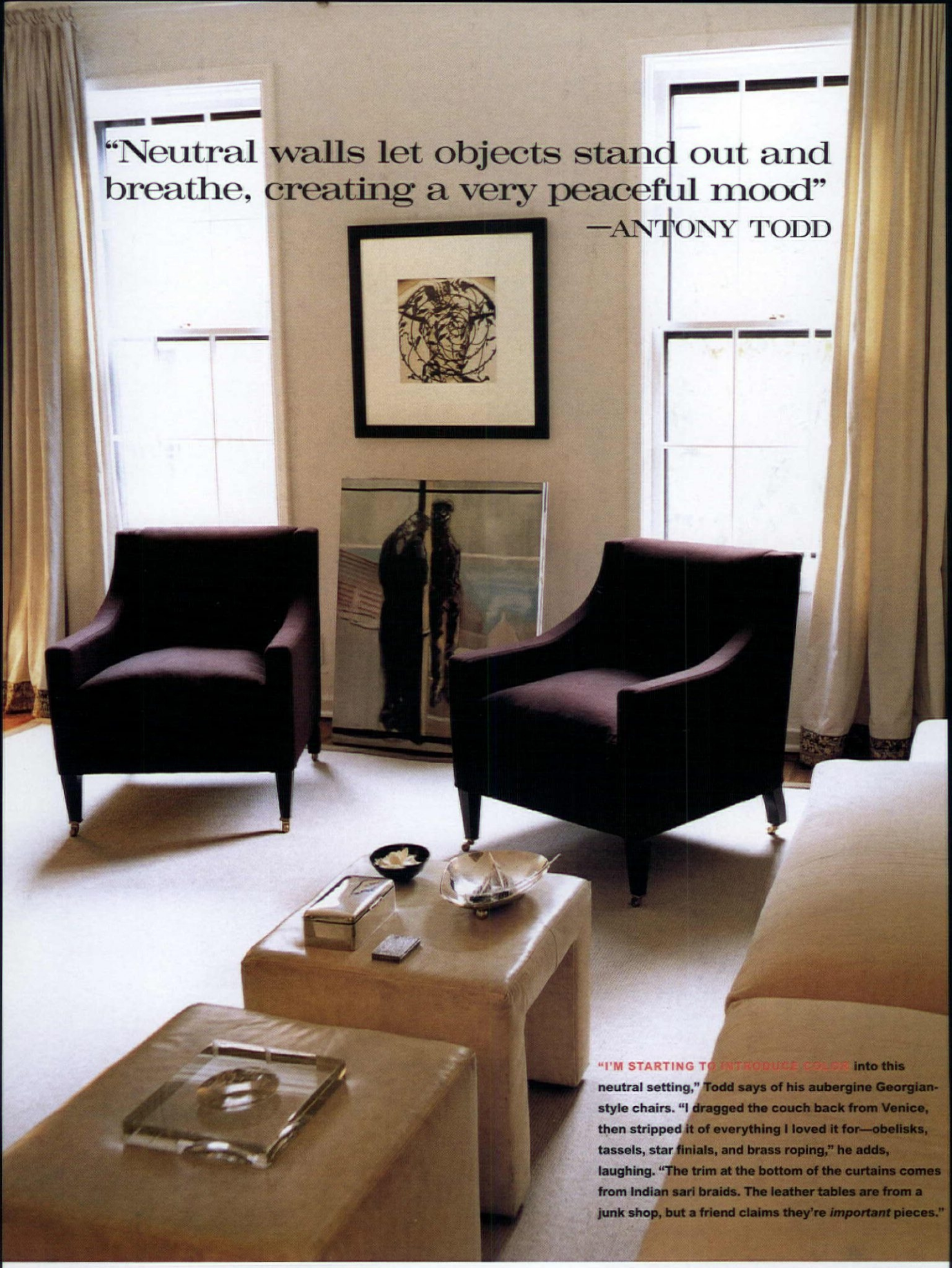
The Australian-born Todd began to hone his aesthetic in childhood. "When my parents would go away, I'd redecorate the house, pulling things out of cupboards and moving all the furniture." In these pages, Todd—whose bouquets can be seen at Manhattan's new DKNY store—explains how he brings his keen eye for form and beauty to bear on every aspect of his home life, from fabrics to furnishings.



A BACKGROUND IN THEATER SET DESIGN shows in Todd's creations, from a dramatic bouquet of roses in his studio, above, to the decorations for an elegant, Asian-inspired summer party, right, with mango, pink, and tangerine silks, simple sprays of white orchids, and gardenias floating in water.



TODD'S HOME, like his work, has a clean, effortless feel and a tactile sensuality. "I found this bench on the side of a road," he says, "and removed about a hundred coats of yellow paint from it. I shipped this Victorian mirror from Australia for its distressed glass. But when it arrived, the movers set it down outside, and a lady walked across it, breaking the glass." Making do, Todd trimmed the gingerbread ornament off the frame, whitewashed it, and added a new mirror.



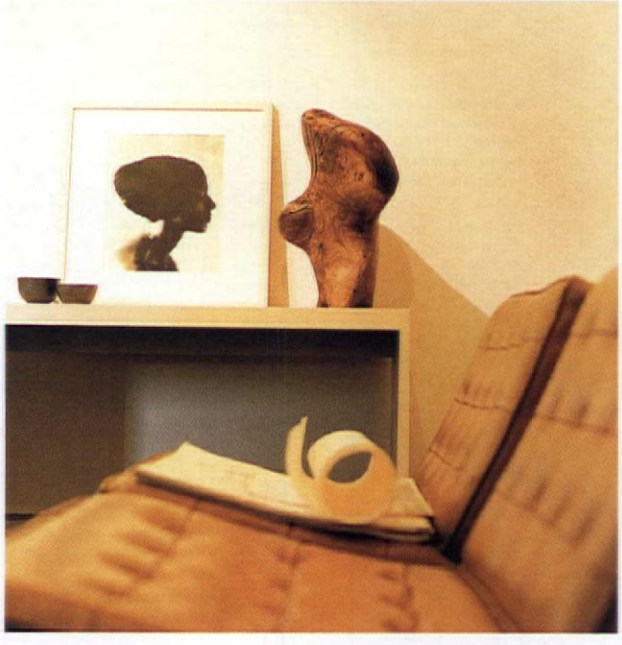
"Neutral walls let objects stand out and breathe, creating a very peaceful mood"
—ANTONY TODD

"I'M STARTING TO INTRODUCE COLOR into this neutral setting," Todd says of his aubergine Georgian-style chairs. "I dragged the couch back from Venice, then stripped it of everything I loved it for—obelisks, tassels, star finials, and brass roping," he adds, laughing. "The trim at the bottom of the curtains comes from Indian sari braids. The leather tables are from a junk shop, but a friend claims they're *important* pieces."



"RATHER THAN BE BURDENED with another piece of furniture," Todd explains, "I hung panels of fine wool behind the bed. They soften the wall and can be easily packed."





PROPS FROM PAST EVENTS lay about Todd's workshop, left. "My father worked in TV in Australia," he says, "and I grew up wandering around the prop shops of the Melbourne studios." **TODD'S OFFICE**, above, features a few select objects in muted tones: a sculpture from Troy, a Bill Phelps photo, and Barcelona chairs.

TheIndex

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This one's named Peg.
Oh, I took off her leg.

I'll call this one Ned.
There goes his head.

(Guess I'll have to make more gingerbread.)

I'll need sugar and baking soda and cloves that are ground.
Shortening and salt and this allspice I've found.

How about Shecky?

Not without
his necky.

Perhaps Mr. Mac.
Without his back?

(It's quite fortunate flour comes by the sack...)

Pass the cinnamon, the eggs, the ginger - don't stop!
Our epicurious.com recipe calls for frosting on top.

May we call this one Gene?
Minus his spleen?

That looks like my mutter.
Shouldn't have gut her.

(I really need to get better with that cookie cutter.)



Don't call me a shrimp.

Why do they call me a shrimp if my first name is Jumbo?
If I can stand up to beer batter, tempura and gumbo?
I'm colossal. I'm extra large. I'm bigger than Dumbo.
Synonymous with runt? I pay no heed to that mumbo.

How can they call me a shrimp when that's not my size?
In England I'm surrounded by curry and in the colonies fries.
Now don't confuse me with prawns, that I despise.
I'm the biggest thing in shellfish, so when will you realize?

You can call me a shrimp, but my confidence is not shaken.
I dominate cuisines from European to Jamaican.
The Chinese butterfly shrimp wrapped in fresh bacon.
Visit epicurious.com if you think I'm mistaken.



The snow hits the ground
At this fine time of year.
And we need to prepare.
Because you-know-who is near.

No, not him.
Not the fat guy
In the suit.
But Uncle Morty,
Auntie Jane,
Cousin Ike are
En route.

And my boss
and your boss. The whole motley crew.
So many !@#* people, so much cooking to do.

So let the ovens flame on! And boil up the waters.
Uncork your ears, and take down these orders.

Franks in blankets,
Egg rolls and wine.
Stuff for mixed drinks,
Oh, that vodka goes fine.

Chicken satés.
Ground beef frijoles.
The big tub of sour cream,
The big guacamole.

The crowd will cheer mightily.
Every hand on a pompon.
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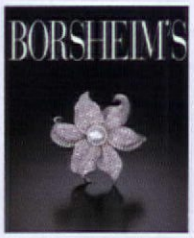
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(Signed) Charles H. Townsend, Executive Vice President

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PHOTO CREDITS
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CORRECTIONS
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—PRODUCED BY MARGARET A. BUCKLEY

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The Garden of Rocky Delights

(Cont. from page 135) a garden in Kensington for his friend Freddie Mercury. "Freddie came back from a tour and said, 'The garden, dear, it's dead.' I said, 'What? Did you water it?' And Freddie said, '*Water* it, dear?' "

Curry's first California garden was based on the colors of David Hockney's Mulholland Drive paintings—his sort of fauve period. "I didn't pretend to know much about gardening when I started," Curry says, "but it was the nearest I'd ever get to being a painter, I think. And probably a sculptor, too."

Although his garden is dotted with tongue-in-cheek objects—a copper cross from Maine, cherubim, multiple Madonnas—Curry is dead serious about the living art of his garden: "The idea is organizing nature not just into pleasing shapes but also as a kind of spiritual resource, you know? I mean, I find it hard to leave this place. If you start gardening and get into it, what you really want is a lifetime garden. And this is, for sure, it."

The Caviar Caveat

(Cont. from page 91) in the coldest part of your refrigerator. When it comes to presentation, simplest is best: a bed of shaved or cracked ice and some of those absurdly adorable little caviar spoons, in horn or mother-of-pearl, is all you need. (You can order them from the major suppliers right along with your caviar.) Purists reject all those fancy serving dishes and leave their caviar in the tin, lest the eggs be crushed in the transfer. You might want freshly made toast points to go along, or a bowlful of fingerling potatoes gently simmered in their jackets. Store-bought blini tend to mute the caviar's impact, being almost invariably too clammy or sweet; skip them unless you make your own little pancakes out of Pennsylvania buckwheat. They're worth the trouble. So is finding high-quality crème fraîche, like the ones made by California's Cowgirl Creamery or Vermont Butter & Cheese Co.

But, in the end, good caviar can stand alone, no embellishments necessary. At this new turn of the century, which has seen the alarming depletion of Caspian sturgeon—prehistoric fish that may not outlast our lust for their eggs—caviar is best savored mindfully. Joyously. Discreetly. And with a certain thankful reverence.

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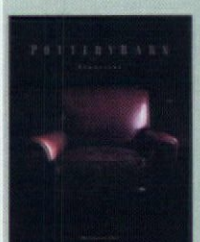
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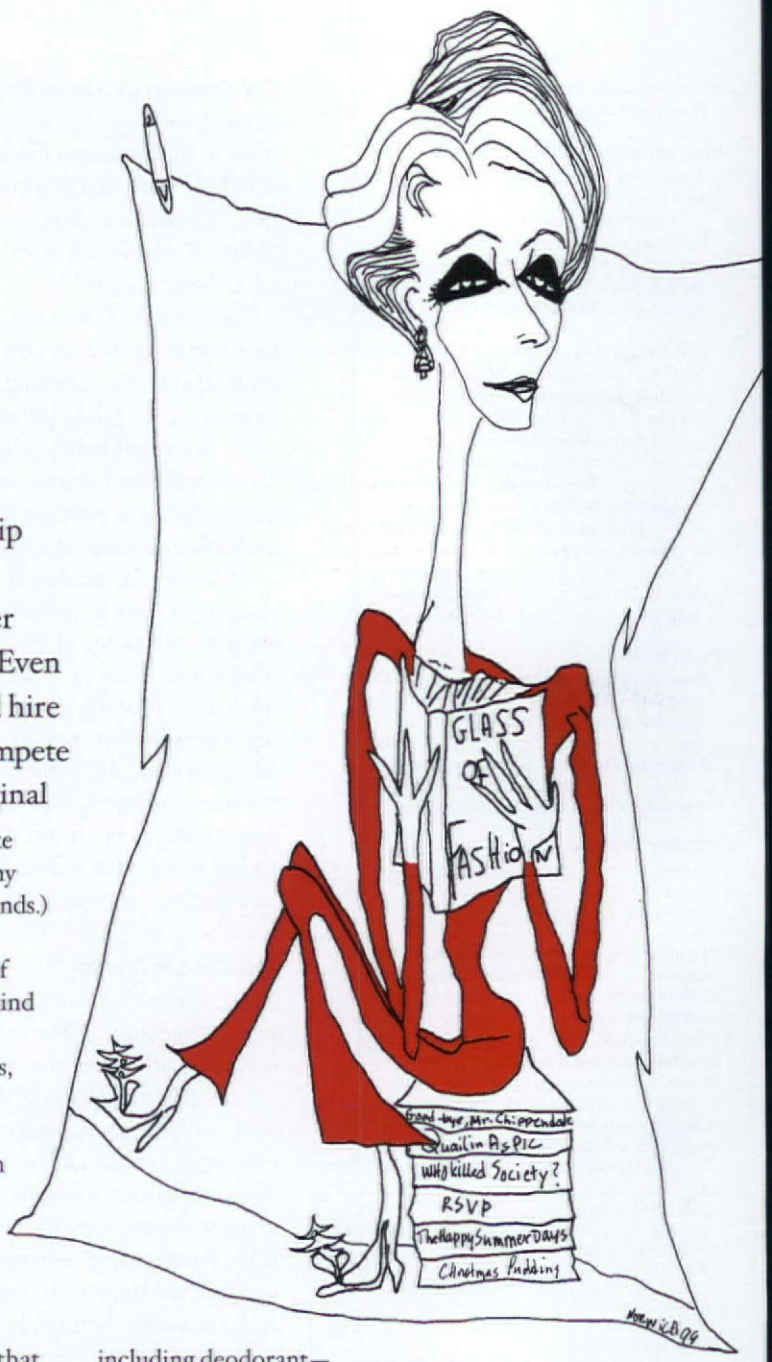
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by william norwich



IT'S A WINTER wonderland of potential etiquette blunders out there, now that the championship holiday shopping season is here. But you know the basics: Never recycle presents. You'll always be found out. Even if you do like the new New York rich do and hire people to wrap for you full-time, you can't compete with the integrity of the original store's original wrapping job. (Which doesn't mean I didn't use that fake silver rococo goblet a dear friend sent in a big blue Tiffany box last year to hold a few cut flowers on summer weekends.)

Speaking of scissors, and other sharp objects—don't give them. In some cultures, they signify the severing of friendship. Clocks are also tricky. They sometimes remind the recipient that time is running out—for them. (On the other hand, so to speak, watches, especially Rolexes, can carol a message of love 24-7.) If you buy something secondhand or, as the new New York rich would insist, "antique," make certain it never belonged to the person to whom you are giving it. If you wish to give some token of your esteem to your favorite purveyors—hairdresser, butcher, Botox helper—give money (a tip) if they are an employee, but give a present if they own the shop. And, unless you work for some glam luxury purveyor—Gucci, Prada—don't give products that advertise your company. A baseball cap with matching T-shirt that says "Acme Vacuums" just isn't that special, even if you became president of the firm this year.

"What is always safe are things to read and things to eat—you can't go wrong with books and food," advises **Anne Bass**, the arts patroness and *House & Garden* contributing editor.

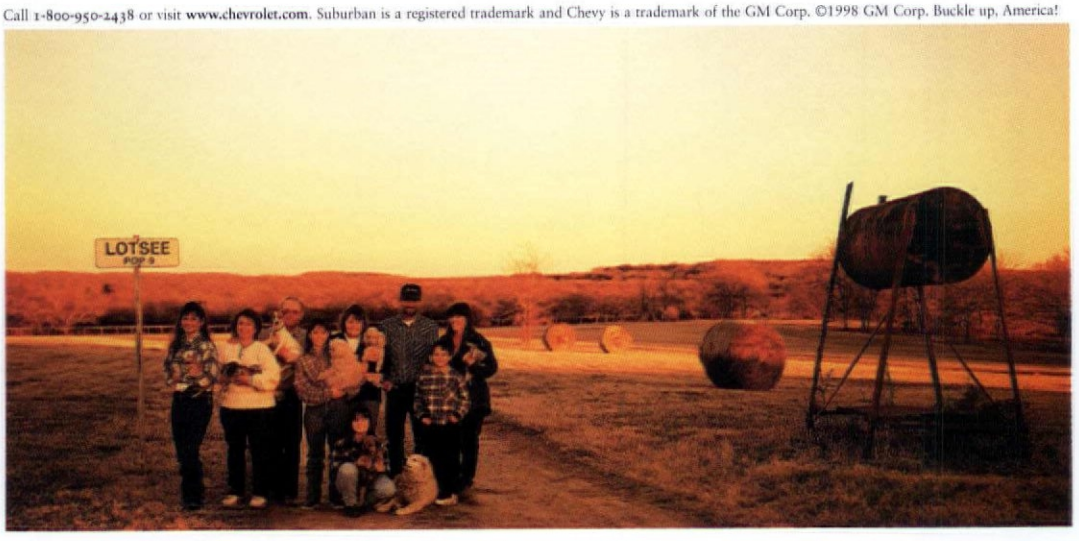
"You can't go wrong with **books and food**"—ANNE BASS

"Beware of giving endangered species," warns lifestyle reporter **Nina Griscom**. She is referring not to first novels but to the recent crackdown on shatooshes, shawls made from the hair of Tibetan antelopes.

"I make everything I give," says interior designer Vicente Wolf. "What can I give that people can't get elsewhere? Something creative. Something personal."

Oh, ho, ho, ho—have some fun with the give-and-get thing. It's Christmas! How about some wonderful toiletries—including deodorant—for that stinky colleague? Why not furry red slippers for the noisy upstairs neighbor, and a candy-striped muzzle for her yapping pet? Or vice versa. If you are really daring, you might try a benign practical joke. When she was just out of college and a cub reporter for Washington, D.C.'s *Times-Herald* in 1952, **Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy** staged a classic. Picture this American beauty surrounded by hard-drinking newspapermen. What to give them for Christmas? Jackie gave splendidly wrapped boxes of liquor to some of the men. Then she rushed to an assignment, first making everyone promise not to open his present until she returned. By the time Jackie got back to the newsroom, they were drooling, visions of Jack Daniels and Johnnie Walker dancing in their head. And then they ripped open their boxes. Surprise! Jackie had filled the bottles with milk.

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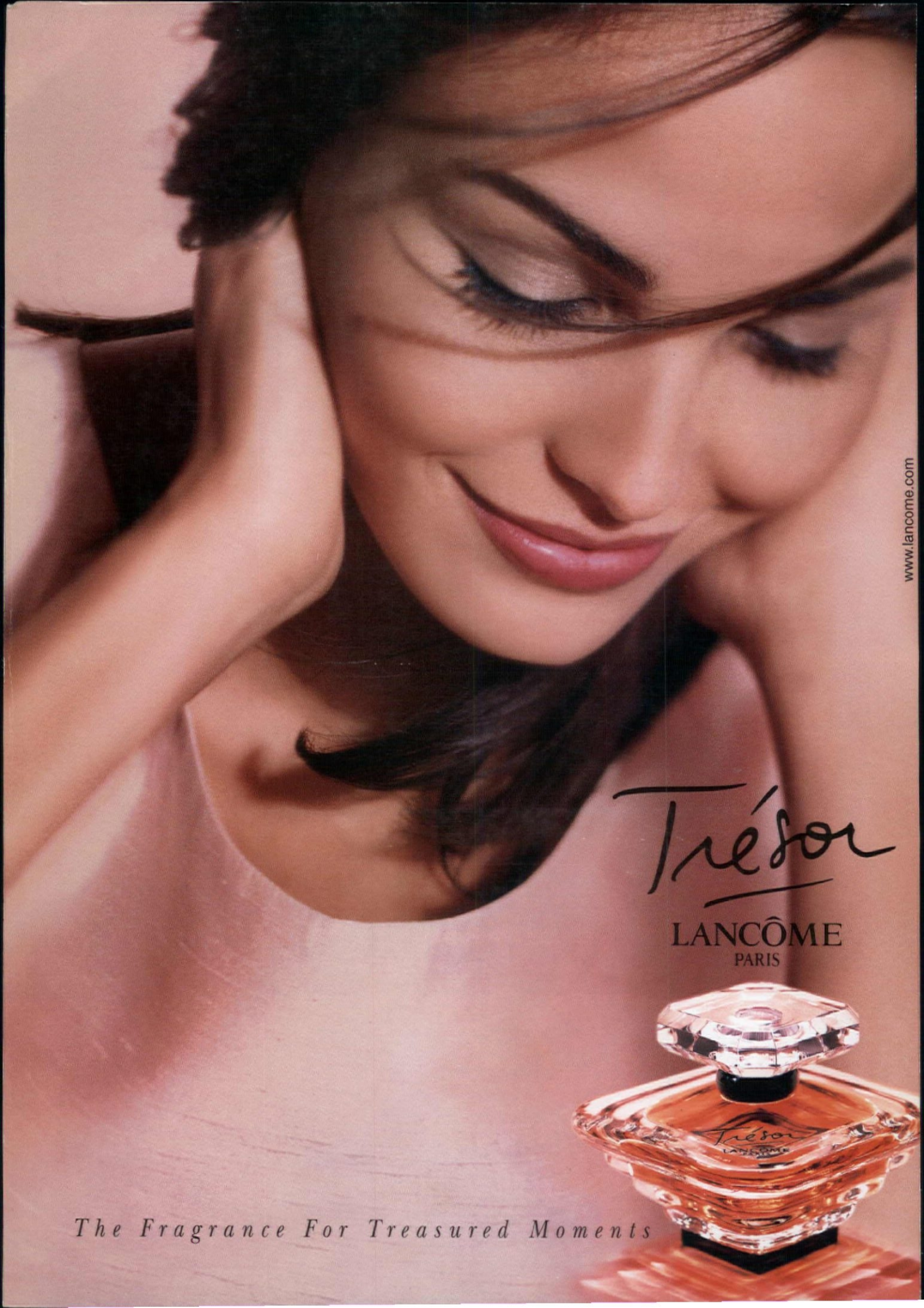
The Chevy Suburban. Holds up to nine.

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